

CRANFIELD UNIVERSITY

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Part-time working arrangements for managers and professionals:
a process approach

School of Management

PhD
Academic Year: 2007 - 2014

Supervisor: Professor Clare Kelliher
July 2014

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This thesis is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for
the degree of PhD

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ABSTRACT

This thesis concerns the relatively recent phenomenon of part-time managers and professionals. The focus is the part-time working arrangement (PTWA) and specifically the process by which it emerges and develops, building on existing literature on working-hours preferences, the role of the organization in part-time working and alternative work organization for temporal flexibility. Two large private-sector organizations, each operating in the UK and the Netherlands, provided four different research sites for narrative interviews with 39 part-time managers and professionals.

The key contribution to knowledge is to identify the process of developing a PTWA as a combination of the formal negotiation of a flexibility task i-deal and an informal process of job crafting. In a situation of high constraint – where the individual's goals conflict with organizational norms and expectations – the tensions between 'being part-time' and 'being professional' necessitated identity work at each stage, as individuals constructed a 'provisional self' which in turn enclosed each stage of the development of the PTWA. The four stages were: first, evaluation of alternative options, including postponing the transition to part-time until more appropriate circumstances arise; secondly, preparation of the individual business case for part-time; thirdly, formal negotiation of a flexibility task i-deal; and finally an informal, unauthorized adaptation of the arrangement over time. Collaborative crafting of working practices (predictability, substitutability, knowledge management) provided greater opportunities for adaptation than individual activities.

This study's contribution to theory in the nascent field of part-time managers and professionals is a process model which suggests how three sets of discourses act as generative mechanisms at each stage of the emergence and development of the PTWA, creating or destroying 'action spaces'. These discourses are: the perceived 'nature' of managerial and professional work, the perception of part-time as a personal lifestyle choice, and the understanding of part-timers as either 'other' or the 'new normal'.

Keywords:

Flexible working; temporal flexibility; i-deals; job crafting; identity discourses; provisional selves;

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My greatest thanks are due to my supervisor, Professor Clare Kelliher, who has remained a calm, clear-headed and wise presence throughout; and to the other members of my panel, Professor Donna Ladkin and Professor David Buchanan, who have provided challenge and support at every stage. Thank you all.

I give special thanks to Professor Sue Vinnicombe and all the staff and doctoral students at the International Centre for Women Leaders, for 'adopting' me, inviting me to meetings, providing invaluable insights and questions, and enabling me to see where I was going. Dr Deirdre Anderson encouraged me to start this journey and has continued to encourage me throughout, and other members of my doctoral cohort have provided rich discussion and debate. Thanks to Thora Thorgeirsdottir for peer auditing of coding, and to Caroline and Judith for reading and editing.

My family has patiently tolerated my devotion of time and energy to this endeavour, especially as each PhD review, presentation, conference paper or deadline loomed. Thank you to my husband Chris – I really couldn't have done it without you – and to my fabulous and longsuffering sons Matthew and Nicholas, who remained cheerful and unruffled, and enjoyed readymade pizza rather too often. I love you all very much.

And finally, a heartfelt thank you to all those who facilitated or were interviewed for this research, and to those many others who have shown an interest in it. Your enthusiasm for the subject, your belief in its importance, and your hunger to change the world of work have kept me going. George Bernard Shaw said,

The reasonable man adapts himself to the world: the unreasonable one persists in trying to adapt the world to himself. Therefore all progress depends on the unreasonable man.

To all of those women, and increasing numbers of men, who persist in trying to adapt the world of work to embrace those who want to work less, I salute your unreasonableness. Long may it continue.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

PT	Part-time
FT	Full-time
PTWA	Part-time working arrangement
FTWA	Full-time working arrangement
FTE	Full-time-equivalent

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Chapter introduction

The aim of this research is to examine how and why a part-time working arrangement (PTWA) for managers and professionals emerges and develops. This introductory chapter sets the context for this investigation, beginning by examining the sources of my own interest, both personal and professional, in examining part-time professionals and managers, and then making the case for the study of the topic based on its social significance in the UK and the Netherlands. After defining the key concepts relating to both the work and the people who do the work, as they are constructed in the contexts studied, I will provide an outline of the structure and content of the entire thesis.

1.2 Personal context

Before embarking on this thesis, I worked as a consultant in flexible working, implementing a more flexible culture in large organizations. Many of these corporates were dominated by 'ideal workers' (Acker, 1990) who devoted their lives to their work and delegated domestic and family work to their partners. The business drivers which merited the employment of a consultant were often temporal and locational flexibility for full-timers: although work-life balance was stated as an organizational goal, part-time felt like the Cinderella of flexible working.

I had a personal reason for interest in the topic too: as my two children grew older, and we dispensed with full-time childcare, it just didn't seem possible to maintain two full-time careers, and my husband and I slipped into the 'one and a half' family model in which I became a part-time worker, while he continued as an 'ideal worker'. Before moving into consulting work, I had been an 'ideal worker' myself, but with the one and a half family model, I no longer fitted the mould. As I engaged more with mothers struggling to work part-time while also caring for children, I observed the loss of professional potential among women

who had left the corporate world, and I also became curious about how I could make sense of combining the 'professional' and non-work dimensions of my life.

I therefore come to this topic with both a personal and a professional interest in it: while this brings a depth of understanding of the practical problems inherent in part-time working, it also highlights the importance of reflexivity during the research process, and stating my 'position' in the research, which I do here, in the methodology chapter and in the conclusion. I acknowledge that my experience and interests influence the perspective from which I carried out this research, the research questions I identified, the follow-up questions I asked the interviewees, and the conduct of the analysis. I also acknowledge a sympathy with women's experiences of the corporate world and the 'competing devotions' (Blair-Loy, 2003) of family life, while also retaining the imprint of my own training in business and experience of running a division of a corporate.

1.3 Research rationale: developing the research question

1.3.1 Prevalence and importance of part-time work

Part-time work is recognized across Europe as an important means of reconciling work and personal life, and of enabling an ageing workforce to remain employed (Eurofound, 2012b). Part-timers make up a substantial part of the labour force: across the whole of Europe, and where part-time is defined as working 34 hours per week or less, 24% of workers were part-timers in 2010 (Eurofound, 2012a). Both the UK and the Netherlands have some of the highest proportions of part-time workers in Europe: 30% of the UK workforce, and 51% of the Dutch workforce, worked part-time in 2010 (Eurofound, 2012a).

Part-time is also a growing phenomenon: between 2000 and 2010, part-time work grew across Europe by 26% (Brenke, 2011), but the rate of growth was much higher in the Netherlands, at 26%, than in the UK at 13% (Brenke, 2011). There has been much debate recently about 'involuntary' part-time working, ie

those who would prefer to work full-time but, often as a result of economic circumstances, can't find a full-time job. However, the vast majority of the UK's part-timers, 84%, were voluntary in 2010, and the same was true in the Netherlands with 94% voluntary part-timers (Brenke, 2011).

1.3.2 Gender and occupation in the part-time workforce

Part-time work remains an overwhelmingly female phenomenon: three quarters of part-timers are female in both the UK and the Netherlands (OECD, 2013). Only 11% of British men and 17% of Dutch men work part-time, but 39% of British women, and 60% of Dutch women work part-time (OECD, 2013). Part-time work plays an important part in gender equality strategy across Europe, as it can be a means of retaining women in the workforce (Eurofound, 2012a). However, part-time jobs are often not 'quality' part-time jobs, leading to the marginalization of part-timers (O'Reilly and Fagan, 1998; Visser, 2002; McGovern et al., 2004; Connolly and Gregory, 2008; Lyonette et al., 2010). Governmental and organizational gender equality strategy may also be informed by the debate about whether the gender split in part-time working is a result of women's preference for domestic and family roles, or constraints in the structures and culture of society.

The growth of part-time work among professional and managerial occupations is a relatively recent phenomenon, resulting from the influx of women into these occupations in the last quarter of the 20th century (Visser, 2002; Beechey and Perkins, 1987; Gallie and Ying Zhou, 2011). Until this point, the typical manager or professional was an 'ideal worker', defined by Acker (1990, p.149) as 'the male worker whose life centers on his full-time, life-long job, while his wife or another woman takes care of his personal needs and his children.' The full-time job is therefore not a gender-neutral concept, but already 'contains the gender-based division of labor and the separation between the public and the private sphere' (ibid.). Women entering managerial and professional occupations encountered a male-patterned construction of 'a job', but have

largely retained their domestic and caring roles (Crompton et al., 2005). Part-time work has become a means for women to combine professional work with non-work roles, and retain a position in the workforce, but a quarter have had to downgrade the type of work they do (Connolly and Gregory, 2008; Lyonette et al., 2010) while many others leave the workforce because of the lack of part-time or shorter-hours job opportunities (Euwals, 2001; Stone, 2007; Cha, 2010).

Three quarters of European companies had no managers or professionals among their part-time workforce in 2009, but the Netherlands had the highest rate of part-time managers and professionals in Europe, with 47% of companies having highly-qualified part-time members of staff (Eurofound, 2009). The UK had the second highest proportion of part-time managers and professionals: the proportion of part-timers varies with occupational category, with 12% of managers, 18% of professionals, and 23% of associate professional and technical staff working part-time (Office for National Statistics, 2013).

As the dual-earner household model (Jacobs and Gerson, 2001) has become more common, and men have started to want more time with their family (Crompton et al., 2005; Plantenga et al., 1999; van Wel and Knijn, 2006), men's participation in part-time work might be expected to have grown to compensate for women's increasing performance of paid work. However, as shown by the figures above, men's absence from part-time work is striking, and may be attributed to a wide range of social, cultural and psychological factors (Sheridan, 2004).

1.3.3 Preference to work less

Nearly a third of European workers said they would like to work fewer hours in 2010: in the Netherlands, the proportion was 27%, and in the UK, 30% (Eurofound, 2012a). However, among those working long hours, the proportion who preferred to work less jumped dramatically: 65% of those working over 48 hours per week would like to work less (Eurofound, 2012a). Studies in western developed economies have identified other groups with a strong desire to

reduce their hours: managers and professionals, women, older workers, the highly-paid and highly-educated (Eurofound, 2012a; Fagan, 2001; Stier and Lewin-Epstein, 2003; Boheim and Taylor, 2004; Reynolds and Aletraris, 2006). There is evidence that the barriers to part-time work for these groups are not financial (Fagan, 2001; Boheim and Taylor, 2004): those who say they would like to work less are also willing to earn less.

Part-time as a social phenomenon, and a managerial and professional phenomenon, for women and increasingly for men, has therefore grown in importance. However, longitudinal studies have shown that a preference for working less is harder to achieve than a preference for working more (Boheim and Taylor, 2004; Reynolds and Aletraris, 2006). Why is it so difficult for managers and professionals to work less? Why do so many have to downgrade in order to achieve part-time status? These questions formed the starting point for this research.

1.4 Defining terms

This section defines the terms used in the thesis. I follow Perlow (1998; 1999) in my understanding that concepts of time, employment and professional work are constructed within local work environments and that meanings will vary from one locale to another. The academic field of part-time professionals is emerging and disjointed, with terms and language not used consistently in either academic or everyday use. I divide my definitions of terms into the two broad categories of 'work' and 'people'.

1.4.1 Work

Work has been defined as 'any expenditure of human effort aimed at producing a socially valued good or service' (Vallas, 2012, p.3). For much of human history, work meant some form of independent work based in one's own home

or locale (ibid); it is only since the industrial era of the nineteenth century that work has become synonymous with paid employment or 'wage labour'.

The ancient Greeks recognized different types of work: productive labour was distinguished from 'reproductive' work with family and friends to develop relationships and public participation in citizenship (Standing, 2011). Classical political economists left out the latter definition, characterizing work as the contracted exchange of labour for money: the more recent neo-liberal focus on achieving human happiness by growing GDP, and maximizing shareholder value, has minimized the value of work done for the community or family, or for society more generally, in western developed economies (Schor, 1991; Schor, 2011; Layard, 2005; James, 2008). Only paid work counts – and gets counted, in the form of GDP (Schor, 2011; Layard, 2005) – although there have been some attempts to redefine 'work' to include both paid (market) work and unpaid (caring, family and domestic) work, such as Glucksmann's (2005) 'total social organization of labour' or Ransome's 'total responsibility burden' (2007).

Leisure, far from being the symbol of status it used to be for 'gentlemen' (Golden, 2009) or the opportunity for learning and engaged citizenship understood by the ancient Greeks (Standing, 2011), is now a lower status activity than paid work (Golden, 2009; Pfeffer, 2010). As work provides personal identity, development and learning, social standing and self-respect, as well as a social network and relationships (Golden, 2009; Isles, 2004; Hewlett and Luce, 2006) it is increasingly difficult to distinguish work from leisure (Lewis, 2003).

Working time

Work in the pre-industrial agrarian economy followed the rhythms of the seasons and daylight; each task had its own time (Perlow, 1999). Only in the industrialized society of the nineteenth and early-mid twentieth century was work organized by the clock, with blocks of time controlled by the needs of the machine, and a six-day working week punctuated only by the Sabbath. The

five-day week became the norm in the 20th century, as collective bargaining reduced 'normal' working hours (Arrowsmith, 2002). The normative construct of a 'full-time' job has its roots in the industrial period; 'standard employment', meaning full-time and permanent employment, became the norm only after the Second World War for the male breadwinner earning a 'family wage' in return for donating his labour exclusively to his employer without any expectation of domestic responsibilities (Pfau-Effinger, 1993).

'Full-time' and 'part-time' working arrangements

A working arrangement describes the employment relationship between employer and employee. The standardized jobs of the industrial era were defined by a number of hours per week, typically 35 or 40 for a full-timer and under 35 (sometimes under 30) for a part-timer (Office for National Statistics, 2013). However, these definitions of full-time and part-time are increasingly irrelevant in 21st century managerial and professional work. The 'full-time' manager or professional works a number and schedule of hours determined as much by the demands of the globalized, technologically-enabled, knowledge-based business environment as by anything written in their employment contract: the latter may state 35 or 40 hours per week, but the psychological contract (Rousseau, 2004) in many competitive commercial environments is understood to mean long days (10-12 hours a day) in the office and working during evenings and weekends, sometimes from home, when the job demands it (Hewlett and Luce, 2006; Burke and Cooper, 2008; McCann et al., 2008). In an 'extreme jobs' environment, where working hours are 60+ per week, a part-timer may be doing 40-50 hours, equivalent to more than the full-time norm in other environments.

However, hours are increasingly not the defining feature of the employment relationship for managers and professionals, but rather a job is defined, and rewarded, by the achievement of outputs. Outputs may be difficult to define and measure in managerial and professional work, and the confusion between hours and outputs is one of the tensions at the heart of the PTWA, as will be

shown in later chapters. Moreover, full-time hours are part of the unquestioned 'natural' order of work (Sheridan, 2004), while part-time work in some contexts is perceived to be synonymous with working mothers (Smithson et al., 2004; Smithson and Stokoe, 2005); the concepts of full-time and part-time work remain strong normative constructs and retain their symbolic meanings: 'When management demands time, it is often demanding a display of commitment and loyalty rather than simply insisting on time worked for money paid' (Meiksins and Whalley, 2002 p.77).

The common-sense definition of 'part-time' adopted here is therefore working less, and being paid proportionately less, than the norm, whatever the norm is in any particular environment. Part-timers in this research self-defined as such.

The term 'part-time' rather than 'reduced-load' is used throughout the research: the latter term, used in an attempt to reduce the stigma of the focus on time (e.g. Lee et al., 2000) was not well recognized in the contexts studied.

Secondary and retention part-timers

The focus for this project is 'retention' part-time workers, whose employers have allowed the transition to part-time in order to retain their services, and who are usually doing relatively well-paid and secure jobs (Tilly, 1996), rather than employer-led flexible working, which tends to be associated with 'bad jobs' (McGovern et al., 2004) which offer less security and status, low pay and poor conditions.

1.4.2 People

Managers and professionals

In this research, participants self-identified as managers and professionals. Some were professionals in the sense of having achieved a qualification and membership of a professional body (e.g. tax accountants, auditors, engineers) while others were managers of projects (IT projects, consulting projects, HR

projects), customer accounts or teams of people. Watson (2002) suggests that the concept of a 'professional' has become less analytically useful as professionals embrace corporate commercial values as part of their identity. All participants in this research worked within the kind of competitive commercial environment in which loyalty to one's firm was as important as loyalty to one's profession. The focus was not on distinctions between the two concepts, particularly since a case has been made that managers *are* professionals (e.g. Donaldson, 2000), but on how a PTWA emerged and developed in an environment where working arrangements were open-ended rather than time-defined, and depended more on custom and practice than on contracted hours.

Personal and social identity

Identity is defined by Ibarra (1999, p.766) as

the various meanings attached to a person by self and others (Gecas, 1982). These meanings, or self-conceptions, are based on people's social roles and group memberships (social identities) as well as the personal and character traits they display and others attribute to them based on their conduct (personal identities).

Individual identity is therefore made up of personal characteristics as well as membership of social categories (gender, profession, organization, family, community, etc.) which differ in saliency for each individual.

Employees often make the transition to part-time when another life role becomes more salient (mother, father, carer etc) and much of the early study of part-time work focused on the individual's non-work roles (their reasons for working part-time) rather than the implementation of part-time within the organization (Kossek and Lambert, 2005).

Professional and organizational identity

Professional identity is defined as

the relatively stable and enduring constellation of attributes, beliefs, values, motives and experiences in terms of which people define themselves in a professional role (Ibarra, 1999, p.764).

Identification with a profession or an organization involves 'viewing a collective's or role's defining essence as self-defining' (Ashforth et al., 2008, p.329). Identification happens over time, as a process of experience and feedback (Ibarra, 1999). Working hours have a clear impact on perceptions of professional or organizational membership (Kuhn, 2006; Pratt et al., 2006), with shorter hours and part-time work recognized to have a negative impact (Lawrence and Corwin, 2003).

Discourses

Individuals construct their identities from available discourses in their particular context: discourses are defined (Dick and Hyde, 2006, p.550) as

sets of regulated statements that operate to produce particular versions of reality as it pertains to both material and social objects (Foucault, 1972). Discourse transmits norms and is regulatory in its operation. It is the means by which power is able to circulate throughout the social body.

1.5 Thesis outline

In this chapter, I have outlined the rationale for this research, arguing that the study of part-time managers and professionals is an important one, and that there is a need to explain the over-employment of many managers and professionals, and the downgrading of others when they transition to part-time. The study begins with a review of the literature on part-time professionals and managers, a relatively new and diffuse area which has been analysed in three sections: first, the sociological debate about actual and preferred working hours, contrasting explanations rooted in personal preference with those which prefer institutional explanations, and also exploring the identity-based approach to

working hours. Secondly, the organizational literature on part-time work as a work-life balance or gender equality strategy covers organizational policy, the gap between the rhetoric of policy and the reality of its implementation, organizational culture, the role of managers in making part-time work, and the career penalty consequent upon working part-time. Finally, some of the literature on work design is relevant to part-time professionals, particularly where it touches on the related concept of temporal flexibility.

The literature review revealed a fragmented and under-theorized field, with a wide variety of research philosophies and methods, many women-only studies, and a lack of recent empirical studies of a growing phenomenon in the UK, particularly in the private sector, and particularly studies which include part-time men. The emphasis on part-time as a demographic variable in the sociological studies contrasted with the study of part-time as an organizational and group-level phenomenon in the organizational literature, but the mechanisms which influence working-hours 'choices' remained elusive. This understanding led to an exploratory study with a broad focus, aiming to explore the constraints and enablers of part-time working for managers and professionals.

Chapter 3 introduces the critical realist philosophy of this research, combining ontological realism (that the world exists independent of observation) and a relativist epistemology which accepts that my interpretation of this research is likely to differ from other people's. Three key findings from the exploratory research were: the development of a part-time working arrangement as a *process* which happens over time; the importance of perceptions of the 'nature' of the work; and the implications of part-time for professional identity. These findings clarified the research questions and in particular the process approach to part-time professionals, and the theoretical framework for the study. The research question for the main study was therefore:

- How and why does a part-time working arrangement (PTWA) for managers and professionals emerge and develop?

Sub-questions addressed how a PTWA is defined; the start point, stages and end point of the process; and the impact of the context within which the PTWA

emerged and developed. Chapter 3 goes on to explain the selection of participants for the research, and the methods of analysis used for the 39 interviews conducted with part-timers in the UK and the Netherlands.

Chapters 4 and 5 report the findings of the research. Chapter 4 concentrates on the four-stage process of development of a PTWA, while chapter 5 identifies three dominant discourses which tend to constrain the development of PTWAs, and counter-arguments used by research participants.

Chapter 6 discusses the findings in the context of the existing literature. The PTWA emerges as an individual, proactive process of job design over time, reflecting theories of i-deals, job crafting and provisional identity to describe the stages and events in the process. Analysis of dominant discourses and the success of the challenge of the counter-arguments represents an attempt to ask what would be necessary to create 'action spaces' (Willig, 1999) which might enable potential part-timers to avoid over-employment.

Finally, chapter 7 presents the key contributions of this research. The contributions to knowledge involve the four-stage model of the process of developing a PTWA and the three categories of discourses which influence that process. The contribution to theory in this nascent field of part-time managers and professionals is a process model which suggests how the discourses might act as generative mechanisms at each stage of the emergence and development of the PTWA, creating or destroying 'action spaces'.

1.6 Chapter summary

In this introductory chapter I have contextualized this study of how a part-time working arrangement for managers and professionals emerges and develops. After describing my personal interest in the subject, I presented the significance of research on PTWAs as both a work-life reconciliation strategy and a gender equality strategy, especially in the context of the over-employment of managers and professionals in western developed economies and the downgrading of

those who make the transition from full-time to part-time. I acknowledged the social construction and varying interpretations of the meaning of most of the key concepts in this research, including: work; full-time and part-time working arrangements; and managers and professionals. I then presented an outline of the thesis. In the next chapter, I will analyse the existing literature on part-time managers and professionals.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Chapter introduction

The emergence of part-time professionals and managers is a relatively recent phenomenon, and academic research in the area lacks theoretical development, although empirical research has grown over the past 20 years. My literature review was therefore necessarily broad and varied, and I have structured it in three sections. First is the societal level of analysis: sociological debate about actual and preferred working hours, in which institutional explanations of working hours contrast with explanations rooted in personal preference. Identity-based approaches to working-hours 'choices' are also covered in this section. Secondly, the organizational literature on part-time work begins with Lee et al.'s (2000) three paradigms of organizational responses to individual requests, and then looks at organizations' efforts to use part-time work as a work-life balance or gender equality strategy, covering organizational policy, the gap between the rhetoric of policy and the reality of its implementation, organizational culture, the role of managers in implementing part-time work, and the career penalty consequent upon working part-time. Finally, some of the literature on work design is relevant to part-time professionals, particularly where it touches on the related concept of temporal flexibility.

2.2 Preferred and actual working hours

The sociological debate about part-time work has focused on working-time preferences and the institutional factors which encourage or constrain them, often from the perspective of the different opportunities afforded to women and men in societies based on gendered institutions and roles. As shown in section 1.3.3, there is considerable evidence that a substantial minority of workers would like to work less in western developed economies, especially managers and professionals, highly paid workers, women, highly educated workers, and

older workers (Eurofound, 2012a; Jacobs and Gerson, 2001; Fagan, 2001; Stier and Lewin-Epstein, 2003; Reynolds and Aletraris, 2006; Clarkberg and Moen, 2001). Explanations for the gap between preferred and actual working hours broadly fall into two camps: while some argue that legislation and cultural changes have allowed workers' personal preferences for work or non-work roles to be realized, and have revealed gender differences in those preferences (Roberts, 2007; Hakim, 2002), others point to the institutional and organizational constraints on achieving preferences (Walsh, 1999; McRae, 2003; McDonald et al., 2006; Kan, 2007; Gash, 2008).

2.2.1 Preference theory

Hakim's preference theory (2002) is one of the few attempts to theorize about working-hours choices, but in the academic literature she remains a relatively isolated voice arguing that, as a result of social changes such as equal opportunities legislation and reproductive choices, women have genuine, free choices over their working hours and childcare, and are no longer constrained by the sexual division of labour. Having identified three categories of home-centred, adaptive and work-centred preferences, Hakim argues that a much higher percentage of women than men are home-centred, choosing domestic and family roles, while more men are work-centred.

However, Hakim has been criticized for drawing her conclusions about preferences partly from actual behaviour (Kan, 2007), for drawing causal connections from cross-sectional research and for paying insufficient attention to contextual constraints which differentially affect women's 'choices' (McRae, 2003; McDonald et al., 2006; Gash, 2008; Lane, 2004). Furthermore, working-hours preferences, far from being fixed, essential cognitive structures, have been shown to change over time, as a result of both work and life experiences (Reynolds and Aletraris, 2006; Kan, 2007; Himmelweit and Sigala, 2004). Campbell and van Wanrooy (2013) use longitudinal data and qualitative

interviews to show that preferences are highly ambivalent, and are not fixed, but are always compromises with what is perceived to be possible.

2.2.2 Institutional constraints on working-hours preferences

At the institutional level, constraints on working hours have been shown to include national legislation, national cultural expectations around working hours, particularly as regards gender expectations, and the degree to which part-time jobs are *quality* jobs.

National legislative contexts

Rubery, Smith and Fagan coined the term 'national working-time regime' to describe 'the set of legal, voluntary and customary regulations which influence working-time practice' (1998, p.72). This regime includes working-time regulations, statutory limits, collectively agreed norms, overtime regulations, 'normal' or 'typical' hours of work, unsocial hours of work, and rates of part-time work.

Working-time legislation provides one element of the explanation for over-employment and the difficulty of achieving a part-time job. The unregulated US model of liberal, voluntarist legislation on working hours, based on a philosophy of maximizing market growth as the best way of meeting human needs (Schor, 2011; Layard, 2005; James, 2008) correlates with longer working hours and a lower prevalence of part-time work (Stier and Lewin-Epstein, 2003). The Anglo group of countries, led by the USA and including the UK and Australia (Gupta et al., 2002) generally takes a light-touch approach to labour regulation: in the UK, flexible working legislation offers a right to *request* rather than to have, and a wide range of circumstances in which the employer can refuse a request: the individual has to justify their 'choice' in business terms, and there is a

widespread assumption that part-time is likely to be a disadvantage for the employer (Lewis, 2003; Hooker et al., 2006).

At the opposite extreme is the more interventionist Nordic model, which regulates working time more closely in an attempt to meet social needs as well as economic growth: in countries such as Denmark, Norway and Sweden, part-time work, especially for parents, is a right as governments encourage labour market participation for all (Klinth, 2008; Kvande, 2009; Cousins and Tang, 2004; Rasmussen et al., 2004). The Netherlands, although socially a part of the Germanic group of countries (Gupta et al., 2002), tends more towards the Nordic model in terms of labour regulation (Visser, 2002), and operates a culture of strong legislative encouragement for part-time working, with a right to request part-time work which is almost universally honoured, except in rare and very specific circumstances (Plantenga et al., 1999; Den Dulk et al., 2011).

Childcare, domestic labour and gender expectations

The cultural context, however, may be more important than legislation in explaining over-employment and the constraints on part-time working: one study of female managers (Peus and Traut-Mattausch, 2008) finds that German managers, despite a more family-friendly legal framework, find it harder to combine work and parenting than American managers, who report higher levels of support from their partners, managers and organizational cultures. Factors which help explain the emergence of part-time work, particularly for women, in some countries and its failure to emerge in others (O'Reilly and Fagan, 1998) include the availability and cost of childcare, social and cultural factors such as the meaning and values attached to paid work (as opposed to unpaid caring work), and the expectations around caring for children and the elderly (Is it a state or individual responsibility? Is it viewed as women's work?).

Pfau-Effinger's study of Finland and West Germany (1993) marked the start of research on the impact of cultural and gender norms on rates of female part-time employment. She identified the different family models resulting from

different patterns of national economic development from agrarian to industrial to service economy. In Finland, the agrarian economy, in which women held important social and economic roles, rapidly moved to the service economy, which also offered paid work for women; as a result, responsibility for childcare was taken on largely by the state, and women and men shared work in the 'combination' or dual-earner family model. In West Germany, the industrial model of employment was adopted much earlier and retained for much longer, excluding women from paid employment and developing a strong ethic of private responsibility for family, resulting in the 'one-and-a-half' model of a traditional male breadwinner and a part-time wife.

In many of the Nordic countries, as well as France, state childcare has encouraged women into full-time rather than part-time work, but where childcare is perceived as a parental rather than state responsibility, part-time work for women (the 'one and a half' household of FT man with PT woman) is more likely to have emerged as a solution to the problem of combining work and childcare (Gash, 2008; Rasmussen et al., 2004; Tang and Cousins, 2005). In the UK and in the Netherlands, state provision of childcare is not extensive, and both have high percentages of women, mostly mothers, working part-time (see section 1.3.2). However, in the Netherlands, the 'combination scenario' of both parents taking equal responsibility for earning and caregiving has been promoted at a policy level by governments for the past 20 years (Plantenga et al., 1999; van Wel and Knijn, 2006), with encouragement of the 30-hour working week for both women and men, and rapid expansion in the provision of childcare since 1998 (Visser, 2002). In contrast, policy in the UK remains based on the concept of personal choice within the existing social framework, and most childcare remains in the private sector (Tomlinson, 2007). A comparison of European countries shows that as the breadwinner/housewife model is replaced with part-time working women, as has happened in the Netherlands, the adherence to the work obligation norm reduces (Wielers and Raven, 2013; Wielers et al., 2014).

Another important constraint on women's working choices is the division of domestic labour. Although attitudes towards the division of labour have liberalized (Crompton et al 2005, van Wel & Knijn 2006, Plantenga 1999), behaviour lags behind attitudes: women retain responsibility for childcare in three quarters of UK and Dutch families, with childcare shared equally between partners in less than a quarter of households; women also take responsibility for domestic tasks in around 80% of households with children (Crompton et al., 2005; Tang and Cousins, 2005; Sullivan, 2000). In both the Netherlands and the UK, the most common reason for working part-time for women was caring or family responsibilities: 71% of female part-timers in the UK, and 46% in the Netherlands had caring or family reasons for working part-time (Brenke, 2011). The proportions for male part-timers were 11% in the Netherlands and 24% in the UK (although some of those male part-timers in the UK may be 'involuntary' part-timers doing childcare because they can't find a full-time job, while their partners work full-time).

The quality of part-time jobs

In the UK, the modern phenomenon of *employed* part-timers (as opposed to the self-employed part-timers doing domestic and home-based work in the agrarian and industrial economy) emerged during the Second World War when munitions factory employers began to offer part-time work to their female employees, to prevent them from taking long lunch hours to fulfil domestic tasks (Beechey and Perkins, 1987). Part-time work remained closely associated with women: throughout the boom years of the 1950s and 60s, the shortage of labour in the UK meant that employers were keen to entice women into the workforce by offering part-time jobs. During the 1970s, part-time work grew with the expansion of service sectors – but part-time remained a women's option, mostly for low-paid and low-status workers in sectors such as catering, care work and retailing (McGovern et al., 2004; Beechey and Perkins, 1987). Women in the UK have accepted 'bad jobs' in return for shorter hours (O'Reilly and Fagan, 1998; Connolly and Gregory, 2008) within a framework of the

longest hours in Europe, especially for men (Eurofound, 2012b). A more recent government initiative has attempted to encourage 'quality' part-time jobs (with benefits, development opportunities and work-life balance) in higher-level occupations (Lyonette et al., 2010; Lyonette and Baldauf, 2010) in order to avoid occupational downgrading.

In the Netherlands, in contrast, high quality part-time jobs are more readily available. Women's participation in the labour force was one of the lowest in Europe until the 1970s, but then women joined the labour force in large numbers, influenced by increasing education which gave access to better quality jobs, opportunities for work in new service sectors and equal pay legislation (Visser, 2002). In the absence of state childcare, part-time was women's preferred option (Euwals and Hogerbrugge, 2006). Dutch unions in the 1990s campaigned for the right to PT work, and the growth of secure, high-quality PT jobs covered by collective agreements and with pro-rated benefits further cemented the attraction of part-time work for women (Visser, 2002; Plantenga, 1999). Visser (2002) argues that women benefitted from a 'latecomers' advantage' by moving from non-participation in market work to part-time participation in market work without the intervening 'industrial-model' tradition of full-time work; and that this bottom-up supply of keen potential part-timers was more important in securing 'good' part-time jobs than any top-down attempt by governments or unions to reduce working hours overall. A higher proportion of part-timers in the Netherlands has in turn increased full-timers' preference to work less, reducing the importance of the work obligation norm (Wielers and Raven, 2013; Wielers et al., 2014).

The opportunities for part-time jobs in the UK are therefore more constrained than in the Netherlands, because of the low quality of many part-time jobs.

2.2.3 Consumerism and long working hours

Another approach to understanding the over-employment debate is to analyse the drivers for working longer and harder. Juliet Schor (1991) began a debate

about the drivers for long working hours in western developed economies, and described an 'insidious cycle of work and spend' in which a consumer culture fuels the perceived need for long working hours, and for dual incomes in households which used to have just one. More recently, James (2008) has used the phrase 'selfish capitalism' to describe societies such as the UK and USA (privatised, deregulated and with low taxes, a social system designed to enable individuals to flourish by maximising their earnings): such societies, he suggests, have excessive faith in consumption as a means of meeting human needs, drive people to longer hours of work, and over-value work and its economic contribution to society, at the expense of family, community and other aspects of life. This belief set places a high value on making an economic contribution to society, compared with a much lower value placed on caring work (Warren, 2007) which in turn may discourage part-time working, particularly where 'work' is defined in purely market terms.

Bowles and Park (2005) found that high levels of income inequality in a society (as found in English-speaking countries including the UK) encourage longer working hours, because of the 'Veblen effect' whereby the lower-paid members of society attempt to gain social status by imitating the consumption of the richest. In other European nations, and particularly Scandinavian countries, both income inequality and working hours are lower. It is interesting to note that over-employment seems to be a phenomenon largely confined to western developed economies: in former socialist countries of eastern Europe, for example, there is a stronger desire to increase working hours, perhaps to raise standards of living and match the consumer standards of the west (Stier and Lewin-Epstein, 2003).

In western developed economies, some occupational sectors, epitomized by financial services, have seen the development of 'extreme jobs' for managers and professionals (Hewlett and Luce, 2006), characterized as more than 60 hours per week and with a range of other characteristics such as fast pace, unpredictability, heavy workloads, 24/7 availability to clients, lots of travel and work-related events outside of hours. These workers are highly paid and high

status – Hewlett and Luce conducted their research among the top 6% of US earners – so these are not people who need to work long hours to keep a roof over their head or food on the table. Clearly there are other reasons for working-time choices: it has been suggested that, by focusing on work rather than non-work roles, managers and professionals can achieve status, recognition, high salaries, stimulating work, interesting colleagues, personal and career development (Golden, 2009; Pfeffer, 2010; Roberts, 2007; Brett and Stroh, 2003). While Hakim (2002) might read these as ‘choices’ freely made by an individual with fixed cognitive preferences, another approach is to articulate available working-hours discourses and how the individual constructs their identity from them.

2.2.4 An identity approach to working-hours ‘choices’

To some degree the tension between individual choice and contextual constraints in the sociological debate may be an irreconcilable opposition of agency and structure. Fagan and Walthery (2011) suggest an alternative approach in Sen’s capability perspective which states that choices can only be made from the options perceived to be available. The identity approach, which identifies the discourses available to individuals for the construction of identity, forms another way of explaining how and why working-hours preferences form and change.

Studies of working hours from an identity perspective

This section explores the range of discourses on working hours which are available to those constructing a work identity, and specifically a managerial or professional identity. Work is an important means of defining identity in western societies, and increasing in importance relative to class, background, community, family or gender (James, 2008; Wharton and Blair-Loy, 2002). There is a lack of studies of identity construction specifically focusing on part-time workers, but a meta-analysis of *long* working hours from a social identity

perspective (Ng and Feldman, 2008) shows that the amount of time that individuals devote to work is influenced by the organizational culture and their identification with it, by the day-to-day demands of the job, and also by the salience of their identification with an occupation, and with their family unit.

A qualitative study of workplace time commitments shows how employees make workplace time commitments based on the array of discourses available to them and, crucially, make their selections from these discourses to accord with 'their own self-narratives and the expectations of relevant others in the workplace' (Kuhn, 2006, p.1354). Kuhn further shows that some settings – organizational and geographical – 'tilt' towards either agency or structure: action spaces (opportunities for resistance to managerially defined selves) are created not just by the existence of multiple discourses, or even by the self-conscious adoption of behaviours which are 'appropriate' to the context; rather, time commitments result from the *collection* of a *consistent* set of discourses by the individual.

Professional training and practice have traditionally used long hours as a means of developing a professional identity (Pratt et al., 2006), which presents a problem for part-time workers: 'Being there (being present in time and space) has been a central element in much professional work; consequently, being there less challenges the identity and ideology associated with professional employment.' (Lawrence and Corwin, 2003, p.924). Organizations may encourage long hours via organizational identification (Perlow, 1998; Kuhn, 2006; Kunda, 1992) and professional identity also often serves to increase time commitment (Dick and Hyde, 2006; Alvesson and Robertson, 2006; Merilainen et al., 2004) as professionals strive for 'a noble community purpose' and 'a desire for professional excellence' (Kuhn, 2006). Geographical or location-specific discourses (big city versus small town) also affect workers' time commitments (Kuhn, 2006) while Merilainen et al. (2004) show how societal, cultural and gender discourses around work-life balance are very different in the UK and Finland, offering different possibilities for identity construction for long-hours extreme workers.

One of the discourses mentioned by Kuhn (2006) as contributing to workplace time commitment is beliefs about the nature and characteristics of the work itself. The specific elements of this discourse are tight deadlines, unpredictability, and accountability to multiple stakeholders, all of which are mentioned by other researchers looking at the nature of professional work and its effects on the feasibility of part-time working (e.g. Meiksins and Whalley, 2002; Lee et al., 2002 - see section 2.4.1).

Moreover, it is not always easy to distinguish the non-work self from the professional or organizational self, or to separate out what is driving long hours: Kunda (1992, p.167) points out from his study of IT workers that 'one has to combat both the company's demands and one's own impulses, not easily distinguishable, to allocate more time to work and to the organizational self that is formed in its context'. When work plays a central role in defining identity, working more may be seen as a route to strengthening or confirming that identity, as Brett and Stroh (2003) found among male American MBA graduates. Wharton and Blair-Loy (2002) speculate that the higher degree of preference for reduced hours in Hong Kong compared with the USA may result from the importance attached to work in defining individual identity in American culture. Individual managers and professionals are therefore subject to a barrage of discourses encouraging longer working hours in western developed economies.

Balancing professional and motherhood identities

Discourses encouraging working less are much less common, but motherhood provides the most obvious set of discourses for constructing an identity which does not revolve around work. Women often reduce their working hours in order to fulfil the mothering role (Crompton et al., 2005): the roles of the professional and mother produce a strong role conflict, with each role being defined as a vocation that deserves single-minded allegiance (Blair-Loy, 2003). Managing two 'competing devotions' is a tricky balancing act which causes

some women to give up work, while others remain unhappily full-time (Blair-Loy, 2003; Stone, 2007; Dick and Hyde, 2006).

Men in the UK, on the other hand, find it easier to balance long hours of work with being a good father (Dermott, 2005) because they define the quality of fathering more in terms of symbolic attendance at infrequent events (school plays, parents' evenings) rather than in the regular day-to-day child maintenance activities which make up 'good mothering'. For a mother, and for a worker of either gender, time equals commitment. For a father, a qualitatively different understanding of quality time comes into play. The importance of national cultural context is demonstrated by the contrasting experience of Norwegian fathers, who (Kvande, 2009, p.59) 'experience that care cannot be carried out in short periods of intense interaction'.

Work makes up a key element of male personal identity, and the role of breadwinner is traditionally male. Working less threatens not just financial security but also masculinity (Sheridan, 2004; Hancock, 2012; Williams et al., 2013). A key factor in men's choices about working hours is the financial impact of reduced-load working, and the importance of the breadwinner role for their family (Smithson et al., 2004; Smithson, 2005). Men may delay working part-time until they are financially stable, and tend to be older, well-established in their careers, often nearing retirement, and without caring commitments (Smithson et al., 2004), while women who reduce their working hours usually do so much earlier in their careers, in order to fulfil caring commitments (Crompton et al., 2005; Lyonette et al., 2007), and to support their ideal-worker partners (Stone, 2007; Cha, 2010). However, the degree to which men's working-hours preferences are driven by their perceptions of the options and roles available to them is not clear from existing studies.

Career identity and part-time work

Extensive research has shown that part-time is understood as a reduced commitment to career in many organizations, and a lack of professional

development and career advancement is a major disincentive to work part-time (Lane, 2004; Hoque and Kirkpatrick, 2003; Lane, 2000; MacDermid et al., 2001). When part-time is defined to mean career penalties or lower professional status, part-timers may have to engage in identity work to create a consistent identity: in order to reduce identity dissonance, they may adapt either their behaviour, by working extra hard to live up to the prevailing measures of commitment, performance and career, or their internal identity narrative, by creating alternative definitions of career success.

Studies of the first option (Meiksins and Whalley, 2002; Lee et al., 2002; Kossek and Lee, 2005) show how individuals, particularly those whose skills are in short supply, can develop part-time careers by choosing certain types of jobs and negotiating their working arrangements after having built up 'credit' with their employer by working full-time first. Certain personal attributes, such as competence, clear priorities and initiative are shown to be important in developing a career while working part-time (Catalyst, 1998) as are individual behaviours such as publicising your priorities and schedules; broadcasting the business case for part-time working; establishing personal routines; cultivating champions in senior management; and remaining visible (Corwin et al., 2001).

An alternative way of dealing with the prevailing culture in organizations is to create a different definition of career success: protean (Hall and Moss, 1998) and boundaryless (Arthur and Rousseau, 1996) careers are managed by the individual rather than the organization, and may involve different definitions of career success, relying more on internal self-development and psychological satisfaction than the outward trappings of success in a traditional corporate career (Sturges, 1999). Such a definition of career success enabled managers and professionals in the USA and Canada (mostly women) to create more successful part-time working arrangements, where success was rated by the part-timer, their manager, their spouse or partner, and a colleague (MacDermid et al., 2001), while Meiksins and Whalley (2002) found that female part-time IT professionals defined career success as finding interesting and involving work, perhaps closer in nature to a traditional craft orientation.

2.2.5 Summary of section

The sociological literature on preferences and constraints may represent an irreconcilable debate about working-hours preferences; the literature also suffers from an over-emphasis on large quantitative studies using pre-existing data, and sometimes inadequate or proxy questions (Campbell and van Wanrooy, 2013; Tijdens and Dragstra, 2007), and a shortage of qualitative and longitudinal studies. Campbell and van Wanrooy (2013, p.1151) suggest that quantitative surveys of working-time preferences are inherently unreliable because our understanding of the subtleties, options and constraints around working hours is insufficient, and employees hold ambivalent and often conflicting ideas, so that qualitative research is needed: 'it may be useful to ask directly whether the individual perceives their working-time preference to be feasible and then explore the factors or constraints that underlie that view'.

The identity literature begins to address the tension between preference and constraint by focusing on the discourses available to individuals constructing their identity (Fagan and Walthery, 2011). The literature suggests that individual managers and professionals are subject to numerous discourses encouraging longer working hours in western developed economies, while the discourses encouraging working less are mostly relevant to mothers.

2.3 The role of the organization in part-time work

Fagan and Walthery (2011) suggest that in the field of working hours, the options available are constrained more by organizational factors than by national societal factors. It is clear that the presence of an organizational flexible working policy is not enough to enable those who want part-time working to achieve it: barriers also exist in the organizational culture, in the techniques used to control and encourage long hours, in managers' and colleagues' attitudes to flexible working, and in performance management and career development practices.

As the rest of this section will show, the gap between organizational rhetoric and reality is commonly observed to be wide, and organizations which adopt work-life balance or gender equality policies may not go so far as to make these policies coherent with their other policies, structures or working practices: Ford and Collinson (2011, p.269) conclude that 'Work-life balance initiatives tend to be bolted on, rather than serve to challenge the key determinants of the current obsession with long-hours working that sustains work-life imbalances in the first place', while Kossek, Lewis and Hammer (2010, p.9) confirm that 'mixed messages and ambiguities...about the employer role in work-life integration have prevented the mainstreaming of work-life initiatives.'

2.3.1 Three paradigms of organizational responses to PT requests

At the organizational level, part-time working is usually studied from an employee relations perspective, with flexibility seen as an employee benefit or perk, offered in response to requests, and regarded more favourably if the requests come from high-performing employees (Tomlinson, 2004; Tomlinson, 2006; Briscoe, 2007) or from those with a 'good' reason, such as mothers returning from maternity leave (Hooker et al., 2006). Lee et al. (2000) have categorised these employer responses to part-time working, identifying three paradigms of implementation: the first response, accommodation, means treating requests as random, non-standard events; secondly, elaboration involves developing policies and routines to deal with requests for part-time work; and thirdly, transformation is when employers use part-time working requests as an organizational learning opportunity to find new, more effective ways of working.

Customization of aspects of hours, duties, pay or benefits as an ad-hoc response to employee requests (characterized as i-deals by Rousseau et al., 2006) can be effective because it is context-specific (Lee et al., 2000). However, co-workers may perceive such deals to be unfair, offering special

privileges to some employees, especially mothers, at the expense of others (Van Dyne et al., 2007). While mothers in one sense benefit from this 'accommodation' of their non-work needs, there is also a downside. As Smithson (2005, p.288) points out, 'being seen as a part-timer is not just about working fewer hours, but about the underlying orientations attributed to this role'. In her analysis of the language used by bankers and accountants in the UK, being part-time implied being female, and at the same time, being unpromotable: the concepts were inseparable.

Men may suffer from the perception that reduced-load working is an option for women. Men's requests for part-time work are less likely to be accepted than women's (Hooker et al., 2006) and as Meiksins and Whalley (2002 p.65) found in their study of part-timer IT professionals, 'For men, only making a transition to retirement comes close to being a generally accepted rationale for seeking reduced time.' Since requests to work part-time come mostly from parents, this can also lead to a backlash from colleagues who regard flexibility as a perk for parents while the single and childfree are left to pick up the slack (Kirby and Krone, 2002; Ryan and Kossek, 2008; Hall and Atkinson, 2006). This approach to reduced-load working is supply-led, so managers have 'little control over the frequency, timing and location of requests for reduced-hours working' (Dick, 2009, P.183), which can lead to mismatches between employee and employer/manager understandings and needs (Dick, 2009; Dick, 2006).

Formal policies (categorized as 'elaboration' by Lee et al., 2000), on the other hand, may be insufficiently flexible to cope with different individual circumstances, and different types of work within the organization, although they have the benefit of greater consistency and perceived fairness (Lee et al., 2000). Part-time working policies are fairly widely available in the UK, particularly in large organizations, although the inconsistency of the figures points to some difficulty in defining what 'available' actually means: a UK government survey of employers (Hayward et al., 2007) found that 92% offered part-time hours, but a contemporaneous survey of employees (Hooker et al., 2006) found that only 69% of employees said part-time is available. The

employees might be factoring in cultural, managerial or local team issues to their definition of what 'available' means.

The third paradigm, transformation, appears rarely in organizational research, but Rapoport et al. (2002) describe several instances of 'dual agenda' action research with organizations which have implemented work-family programs (including part-time working) to improve both gender equity and workplace performance. Perlow's action research (2009, 2012) has a similar intention: to disrupt current forms of work design in order to increase opportunities for all employees to take predictable time off (see section 2.4.2).

2.3.2 Organizational culture at odds with policy

Even when an organization has developed the strategic business case for introducing part-time working, barriers have been identified in the organizational culture, particularly the mediating effect of manager and co-worker attitudes. Where formal policies are insufficiently operationalized, managers are uncertain about how to implement them, particularly if they conflict with other policies, such as performance management and career development. Based on her study of professional and technical employees in the USA, Eaton (2003) found that the presence of organizational flexible working policies was unrelated to employees' organizational commitment, but that a measure of the 'perceived usability' of flexible working policies (including part-time) was significantly and positively associated with organizational commitment, suggesting that the usability of a policy is a distinct concept from the existence of a policy.

Wide-ranging research from the Sloan Work and Family Network project on part-time (or 'reduced-load') managers and professionals in the late 1990s in the USA and Canada resulted in several studies of the implementation of part-time working. The manager's attitudes and behaviours can facilitate or prevent both the request for part-time work and the success or otherwise of its implementation (Lee et al., 2002; Kossek and Lee, 2005; Lirio et al., 2008). In the UK, Edwards & Robinson (2001; 2004) used case studies in both nursing

and the police to point out that managers tend to marginalize and under-develop part-timers.

Managers' personal opinions on flexible working send important messages about what is valued in the organization and indeed in society at large (Kirby and Krone, 2002; Ryan and Kossek, 2008; Hall and Atkinson, 2006; Lirio et al., 2008; Almer et al., 2003). It has been suggested (Lee et al., 2002; Perlow, 2001; Sutton and Noe, 2005) that one major reason that family-friendly programs are ineffective is because employers allow middle managers to implement them, giving them more or less priority according to their personal values and attitudes. Meiksins and Whalley (2002, p.59) explain that in their survey of IT professionals, 'employees who want part-time work have to shop around for an agreeable manager' while Lirio et al. (2008) identify a range of managerial behaviours and dispositions which are essential to the successful implementation of part-time working.

A study of US government banking regulators identifies the importance of the discourses of not just managers, but also co-workers: Kirby and Krone (2002) call for further research into how co-workers 'communicate what is and is not acceptable concerning policy utilization...how do they influence and control the actions of others through their discourse?'.

Blair-Loy and Wharton (2002) also point out that, in the 'extreme' world of global financial services, where part-time working is extremely counter-cultural and almost always career-limiting, the take-up of flexibility is determined also by co-workers' and supervisors' ability to protect them from the negative career consequences of taking up flexible options.

2.3.3 Organizational identification and expectations of working hours

A second area in which organizational reality may depart from the flexible working rhetoric is in the working-hours culture. Organizations may encourage

individuals to work long hours not through traditional bureaucratic control but through a culture of individual empowerment and responsibility for customer service, productivity and quality. Increased levels of organizational identification seem to offer the organization 'more work without more pay' (Ellemers et al., 2003) as the employer becomes a source of meaning and social networks for employees. Managers use organizational rituals and rhetoric to blur the boundaries between self and organization, which has the effect of perpetuating time commitment to the organization (Kunda, 1992). The pressure on commercial organizations to compete in the global marketplace has led to the development of high-performance management techniques (McCann et al., 2008; Green, 2008) which transfer responsibility for working hours to employees, and result in longer hours (van Echtelt et al., 2006). Employees have to 'earn' organizational membership by 'being there', and participating in interaction rituals such as meetings and events – a requirement which discriminates against part-timers (Lawrence and Corwin, 2003). Organizations which create a sense of elite identity can rely on employees 'willingly' offering high commitment and long hours: 'the idea of belonging to the elite and thus behaving and performing accordingly seems to increase the willingness to work hard and perform well' (Alvesson and Robertson, 2006).

Perlow (1998) has coined the term boundary control to refer to 'the various ways in which managers in organizations cajole, encourage, coerce, or otherwise influence the amount of time employees physically spend in the workplace'. Her study of software engineers shows that managers used three techniques to exercise this control: first by imposing demands, such as scheduling meetings out of hours; secondly by constantly monitoring both progress and presence; and thirdly by modelling behaviour, such as staying late at the office even when there is nothing for them to do. Since productivity and commitment were measured largely by the number of hours worked, the engineers had very little choice about how they allocated time between work and non-work, unless they were prepared to give up on bonuses, promotions and pay rises.

2.3.4 Career penalty for part-time working

The third area of conflict between organizational rhetoric and reality is performance management and career development. There is ample evidence that part-time managers and professionals suffer career penalties (Hoque & Kirkpatrick 2003). 'Career advancement, higher pay, and interesting assignments' are 'rewards that go to those who work the longest hours' at one software development company (Perlow, 1998). Smithson et al. (2004) identify penalties for part-time accountants as lower pay and benefits (after controlling for job characteristics), less career progress and restricted access to training, while Lane's studies of NHS nurses (2000; 2004) show that part-timers are not less committed, but suffer limitations on career progress and opportunities for training because part-time opportunities are only offered in lower grades. Part-timers are not offered opportunities to demonstrate their capabilities (Edwards and Robinson, 2004; McDonald et al., 2009) and also miss out on networking and mentoring (Durbin and Tomlinson, 2014).

The strength of the normative construct of 'full-time' is demonstrated by Smithson's conclusion (2005, p.288) that, when it came to promotion, the reasons for working part-time mattered more than getting the job done. The few men who chose to work part-time felt the need to draw attention to their reasons for doing so, stressing that they had other jobs or business interests rather than caring roles to fulfil.

Organizations, and individual managers, often make the assumption that part-timers, who are frequently defined as synonymous with mothers (Smithson and Stokoe, 2005), are happy to step off the career track (Dick and Hyde, 2006; Hoque and Kirkpatrick, 2003): in the case of women who reduce their hours in order to have children in their early 30s, this is precisely the time when the corporate career ladder expects an increased commitment of time, and stepping up to management responsibilities.

A further problem for managers is how to manage the performance of part-time professionals. Knowledge work is hard to measure: Perlow (1998) found that managers of engineers used working hours as a proxy for productivity and

commitment, while Landers et al. (1996) found that working hours were seen to indicate commitment and capability, and therefore promotion potential, in American law firms.

2.3.5 Summary of section

The literature suggests that the gap between the rhetoric and reality of flexible working in organizations may be wide – and that many organizations have not closed that gap, whether through ignorance of its existence or a preference for the status quo. The ‘accommodation’ of individual requests for part-time work appears to have remained the norm, but only for employees with special credit. Where a flexible working policy exists, the literature suggests three principal ways in which it may be undermined in practice: the attitudes and behaviours of managers and colleagues, organizational expectations of long working hours, and career and development practices which rely on the number of hours worked.

2.4 The ‘nature’ and organization of managerial and professional work

The study of part-time work in organizations comes mostly from the work-life balance tradition, which has historically tended to focus less on the *work*, and more on the *workers*, particularly the ‘typical’ part-timer, the working mother (Kossek and Lambert, 2005). There has been a relative lack of study of alternative ways of constructing jobs and work processes (Kossek et al., 2010).

2.4.1 Managerial and professional jobs ‘require’ long hours

The discourse of working less is in direct conflict with the discourses of traditional managerial and professional work, which put work before personal

life, are responsive to client demands, and set quality standards which must be met, regardless of the number of hours needed (Lawrence and Corwin, 2003). Part-time work is believed to be difficult, at best, and in many contexts impossible, especially at senior levels, as shown in studies of part-timers in various professions including the police (Edwards and Robinson, 2001; Dick and Cassell, 2004), nursing (Lane, 2004; Edwards and Robinson, 2004), civil engineering (Watts, 2009), management consulting (Merilainen et al., 2004; Perlow and Porter, 2009; Donnelly, 2006), law (Epstein et al., 1999) and IT (Meiksins and Whalley, 2002).

The widespread assumption that some types of work cannot 'accommodate' part-timers is based on the assumption that the 'nature' of the work is fixed, so any type of flexibility is a 'concession' to an individual which is automatically a disadvantage to the organization (Lee et al., 2000). Empirical studies of part-timers have identified particular characteristics of work which are perceived to make them unsuitable for part-timers. Meiksins and Whalley, in their study of IT and technical professionals in the USA (2002), identified tight deadlines, travel, unusual or unpredictable hours, the need to coordinate with other employees, and the need to attend meetings; this last was seen as a particular barrier for managers. Client-facing work is often perceived to be particularly unsuitable for part-time work, as shown in studies of medical professionals in the USA, nurses in the UK, management consultants in the UK, and public sector employees in Australia (Briscoe, 2007; Edwards and Robinson, 2004; McDonald et al., 2009; Donnelly, 2006). Based on their study of a wide variety of part-time corporate employees in the USA and Canada, Lee et al. (2002) suggested that part-timers needed to restrict themselves to work which is autonomous, or project-based. Dick (2009; 2010) found that in the UK police service, part-time work was perceived to be unsuitable for tasks which required continuity, or tasks which were unpredictable in length.

Two further studies have surveyed full-timers' attitudes towards part-time work, and some of the survey questions shed light on the 'nature' and suitability of different types of work for part-timers. First, McDonald, Bradley and Brown

(2009) found that, in an Australian public sector agency, full-timers perceived that job content was perceived to preclude PTWAs in jobs with tight deadlines, client contact, large clients and high service expectations: part-time was better suited to less visible, more routine work. Secondly, Edwards and Robinson (2004) conducted a survey of UK health service managers and nurses (two thirds of them full-time, one third part-time) who reported the following work characteristics which might make part-time unsuitable: responsibility, supervision, mentoring, continuity and having responsibility for a named patient.

The increased need for professionals to collaborate and interact with each other may also encourage longer hours: as the working day is taken up with interaction and collaboration, so they end up having to use their personal time for 'real work', which is defined as the productive work they do individually (Bogh Fangel and Aalokke, 2008).

2.4.2 Alternative work organization for temporal flexibility

Another strand of literature has questioned how 'real' a barrier the 'nature' of managerial and professional work is. Dick and Cassell (2004) found that part-time policewomen were keen to explain their marginalization as due to the nature of the work: the authors read this as an attempt to portray themselves as powerful women rather than victims of sexism; as members of a worthy organization rather than a sexist one; and as acceptable to their male colleagues. In suggesting that women may find the 'nature of the work' a more acceptable reason for their own marginalization than the gendered prejudices of their organizational culture, the authors also suggest that the 'nature' of the work is not essential but constructed.

Studies of temporal flexibility also suggest that barriers may be found not so much in the 'nature' of the work, but in the way that work is organized: in other words, different ways of organizing the same work within the team can lead to very different degrees of temporal flexibility. Perlow (2001) shows that the type

of work coordination (group, managerial or expertise-centred) affects both the number of hours, and the flexibility employees have in choosing their hours. Briscoe (2007) offers similar possibilities for constructing work differently, showing that more formalized rules and procedures, and more standardized working practices, enabled even client-facing work to be shared between team members using 'client hand-offs', which in turn provided greater temporal flexibility.

Two further studies examine working practices which affect reduced-load workers at a work group level, and propose two different models. First, Lawrence and Corwin (2003) suggest that participation in the interaction rituals of a work group determines the degree to which part-time professionals earn organizational membership, and therefore gain access to career progress, professional networks and organizational power. And secondly, Van Dyne et al. (2007) identify the potential negative effects of reduced face-time on the two most important group processes in generating effective group outcomes: group coordination (defined as the interaction required to get the job done) and group motivation (Levine and Moreland in Van Dyne et al., 2007p.1127)

Perlow's (2001) and Briscoe's (2007) studies of temporal flexibility, and models of interaction rituals (Lawrence and Corwin, 2003) and group coordination and motivation (Van Dyne et al. 2007) are all group-based. While only Lawrence and Corwin's study is specific to part-timers, all are suggestive of the idea that an important level of analysis for understanding barriers to part-time work is the work group or team – where colleagues may have to pick up the slack, or deal with potential for delays and lack of interaction, but also where the most temporal flexibility for individuals can be designed into work processes.

Action research studies aimed at improving both work-life balance and effectiveness have also focused on working practices at team level. The pioneering work on 'dual agenda' workplace change (Rapoport et al., 2002; Bailyn 2006) advanced the idea that group-level redesign of work not only reduces the stigma of individual flexible working but also improves group communication and efficiency. This has been borne out in subsequent studies

(Perlow and Porter, 2009; Perlow, 2012). Kossek et al. (2010) suggest that future research needs to focus more on work redesign, in order to give workers more control over their work hours and locations.

2.4.3 Summary of section

Discourses of managerial and professional work contain the expectation of long working hours, attributed to the fixed, unchangeable 'nature' of the work. Studies of temporal flexibility have questioned this discourse, and group-level action research projects aimed at increasing work-life balance have demonstrated alternative working practices which can provide individuals with greater temporal flexibility.

2.5 Chapter summary

This literature review revealed part-time professionals and managers as a fragmented and under-theorized field, with a variety of levels of analysis and approaches, and a tendency to focus on the largest demographic group undertaking part-time work, ie women, and particularly mothers; and a further focus on the impact of part-time work on the career progression of this group.

Sociological studies have shown wide variations in the opportunities for part-time work in different countries, influenced by different working-time regimes, legislation, childcare provision and gender expectations. However, this literature suffers from an over-emphasis on large quantitative studies using pre-existing data, and the debate about preferences *versus* constraints may be an ultimately sterile attempt to reconcile the tension between agency and structure. The identity approach to working-hours 'choices' addresses this tension by focusing on the discourses available to individuals constructing their identity and identifying numerous discourses encouraging longer working hours, particularly for managers and professionals, in western developed economies. The discourses encouraging working less are mostly relevant to mothers.

At the organizational level, many studies have shown a gap between rhetoric and reality, with flexible working policy undermined in practice by the attitudes and behaviours of managers and colleagues, a long-working-hours culture, and performance management and career development practices which over-emphasize the number of hours worked.

At the sectoral level, discourses of managerial and professional work contain the expectation of long working hours, attributed to the fixed, unchangeable 'nature' of the work. Studies of temporal flexibility have questioned this discourse, as have group-level action research projects aimed at improving work-life balance.

Overall, the literature review revealed a shortage of *recent* qualitative studies of part-time managers and professionals in the UK, especially in the private sector, and especially among non-mothers. Cross-national studies identified that different cultural and legislative frameworks influenced the perceived availability of part-time work. Some studies touched on the unsuitability of some types of work for part-timers, while the temporal flexibility literature suggested alternative ways of constructing work at a team level. The contradictions and subtleties of working-hours 'choices' evident in the few qualitative studies on this topic indicated that further qualitative work would be valuable in identifying the options perceived to be available to individuals (Campbell and van Wanrooy, 2013).

The literature review therefore set some parameters for my inquiry: this would be a qualitative study which explored the constraints and 'choices' around part-time work for both men and women. There was a gap in our understanding of part-time work in the private sector, and it appeared that some national and legislative cultures were better able than others to facilitate part-time work, so a cross-national study was indicated. However I had not yet identified a research question, and there seemed to be facilitators and constraints at all levels of analysis: national-level legislative context, organizational-level policy and practice, occupational-level constraints in the 'nature' of the work; and individual-level identity construction, so at this point it seemed that a broad and

open research question would be appropriate. The next chapter describes the exploratory research which helped me to articulate a research question which might help to bring these disparate literatures together, and the research philosophy which would help to answer this question.

3 METHODOLOGY AND RESEARCH DESIGN

3.1 Chapter introduction

In this section I explain my ontological and epistemological position, and then the development of the research design. I go on to describe how the exploratory research clarified the research question and the theoretical position, which in turn led to methodological choices. This chapter also addresses trustworthiness and authenticity.

3.2 Philosophical position

3.2.1 Research paradigm

A research paradigm is a way of 'making connections between ideas, social experience and social reality' (Blaikie, 2007, p.13). Each research paradigm is based on a different intersecting framework of ontological assumptions (about the nature of reality) and epistemological assumptions (about the nature of knowledge and the way in which it can be obtained).

The choice of research paradigm is, as Blaikie (2007, p.25) points out, partly 'an act of faith in a particular view of the world': my act of faith is informed by Habermas's critical theory, and by the belief that *political* choices 'determine what count as the objects of knowledge, the categories relevant to what is taken to be knowledge, as well as the procedures for discovering and justifying knowledge' (Blaikie, 2007, p.136). Professional part-time working in the UK remains relatively under-studied, despite its recent growth; although not conducting feminist research in the strict sense, I do relate to the idea that the relative lack of study of part-time working, and the deliberate and uncritical exclusion of part-timers from some studies of both work design (Morgeson and Humphrey, 2006) and work identity (Ibarra, 1999) could plausibly be connected to its representation as a minority 'women's issue'.

Critical theory also informs my underlying attitudes: critical theory involves questioning the structures of domination, the taken-for-granted, and the belief that the narrow goal of an organization's profits is paramount over the interests of society as a whole (Adler et al., 2007). I question the taken-for-granted assumption of full-time as the 'normal' way to work (especially given that even a 60-hour job is hardly full-time in a 24/7 economy with 168 hours in every week); the belief that part-time working is a 'personal choice' freely and equally exercised by everyone (the structural domination of the 'ideal worker' based on the male full-time worker with a female domestic partner clearly restricts the working choices of women with caring responsibilities); and the assumption that part-time working is detrimental to business and must therefore be restricted or discouraged (possibly a much wider use of part-time work would have greater benefits for society as a whole; possibly part-timers bring unique assets to their employers). I also suggest, following feminist standpoint theory (Calas and Smircich, 2009) that the perspectives of under-represented minorities such as part-timers may be enlightening for *all* professionals and managers, including full-timers, and including men.

These critical leanings have implications for my choice of ontology and epistemology, and highlight the importance of reflexivity in my research methods.

Ontology

Broadly, realist ontologies assume that an external world exists, independent of observation, and is controlled by natural and social laws, while an idealist ontology assumes that no objective reality exists outside of the constructions of human beings (Blaikie, 2007). Idealists (Blaikie, 2007) and also some realists, distinguish between the reality of the natural, material world, which is 'subject to the laws of natural science regardless of our talk about them' (Burr, 2003, p.95) and the reality of the social and psychological world, which is socially constructed through the perceptions of, and interaction between, social actors, rather than being controlled by social laws. It is this social and psychological

world which is the main focus of studies such as mine with emancipatory leanings.

An idealist ontology suggests that social phenomena are constructed from the meanings given to them at different times and places, by social actors; they are therefore open to change and interpretation, rather than having a fixed, essential nature, waiting to be discovered. I have found that Burr's (2003) distinction between three types of reality is helpful here. First, she dispenses with the misunderstanding that constructionism denies 'reality' where reality means materiality. Secondly, she distinguishes between 'real' as in true (the opposite of false) and 'real' as in essential (the opposite of constructed): social phenomena are no less 'real' (where real means true) for being socially constructed – they are not 'unreal, fictitious or illusory' (Burr, 2003, p.92), but can provide powerful influences on social actors. So, while these structures do not exist independently of social actors, the constructions of others may still pre-exist any one individual's language, attitudes and meanings; hence the influence of these structures on working-hours 'preferences'. In so far as social structures remain 'relatively enduring' (although less enduring than natural structures) they also retain a veneer of the 'natural' or essential (Blaikie, 2007). Structures such as the full-time job, or the ideal worker, may therefore appear essential or permanent, as in the phrase the 'nature' of the work.

However, it is not my belief that social structures determine behaviour: a critical realist stance suggests that 'social structures offer possibilities for action, rather than determine behaviour... We can explore the range of potentialities offered by any one situation and we can trace their implications for individual (and collective) experience' (Willig, 1999, p.42). In my study, the development of the part-time working arrangement is a nested phenomenon, realized partly by the individual's proactive crafting (based on the available resources within the inner context of the individual and the work) but also within the material and social constraints of an outer context of the work group, organization, sector and society (Perlow et al., 2004).

Epistemology

Epistemology refers to beliefs about the nature of knowledge, or how it is possible to ascertain knowledge about social reality. The positivist perspective (consistent with realist ontologies) establishes truth claims with reference to observable evidence, which leads to natural and generalizable laws (Blaikie, 2007). In the idealist/constructionist paradigm, however, social phenomena, including the researcher's own accounts of the social world, are constructed by social actors, and are not definitive, universal or 'real' as in essential (Burr, 2003), but reflections of the beliefs and values of the researcher, which are in turn constrained by particular historical and cultural circumstances. Constructionism focuses on language and meaning as tools through which we can understand social phenomena.

For me, the relevance of a constructionist epistemology is its challenge to the dominant social categories and concepts, such as the ideal worker, the full-time job, and the nature of the work, which are not seen as inevitable, permanent, 'proven' or essential, but may be deconstructed – and could therefore be constructed differently. The idealist/constructionist paradigm rejects the idea of a single, observable and provable truth. There is therefore a difficulty about how to privilege one truth claim above another. In what way, and for whom, and on whose authority, is any one truth claim 'better' than another? Willig (1999, p.38) points out that constructionism is good at deconstructing positivist categories, but not so good at putting alternative concepts in place: she argues that 'what is needed is an account which not only suggests that things could be different but is capable of explaining why things are as they are and in what ways they could be better.'

Critical realism (Blaikie, 2007) meets this need by positing the existence of a 'real' domain which must exist, whether or not it is being observed, because the effects are observable. This claim appears to arise from an epistemological stance (neo-realism, Blaikie, 2007): we may 'know' what we know via 'empirical' experiences, which have no existence independent of the person who experiences (observes or in some way senses) them, or 'actual' events, which

exist regardless of whether they are being observed (hence the ‘realism’ of critical realism). From these observations, it is possible to *posit* the existence of generative mechanisms or processes, which Bhaskar (2011) calls the ‘real’ domain. The ontology of Bhaskar’s critical realism thus distinguishes between the real and the actual: since no finite number of instances could ever verify a claim (the black swan might always be discovered), two domains must exist – the actual domain, in which regularities may be observed, and the real domain, which provides the best available causal explanation (Bhaskar, 2013).

The underlying structures or mechanisms (biochemical, economic and social) of the ‘real’ domain generate tendencies of things to act in a particular way – not laws or rules, but patterns of events. These potentialities can only ultimately be identified through their realization: because social actors interplay with social structures, one cannot make predictions about the social world, but can only ascertain tendencies. ‘The objective of critical realist science is not to predict outcomes but to explain events as the specific realizations of structural possibilities’ (Willig, 1999, p.45). The real, actual and empirical domains render compatible ontological realism (that the world exists independent of observation) and epistemological relativity (that different interpretations can co-exist) (Bhaskar, 2013).

Implications for my research

Within a constructionist epistemology, truth claims can only be validated by criteria which ‘can be agreed upon, through negotiation and argument, by a community of scientists, at a certain time, in a certain place, and under certain conditions’ (Blaikie, 2007, p.23). This seems to me to be all that can be claimed for PhD research – a contribution to knowledge and understanding as *currently defined* within the academic community, without any expectation that such contribution will be universal or permanent.

However, Willig (1999, p.49) suggests that social constructionist research can go beyond the moral relativism implied by this stance: by ‘extending

participants' opportunities for action', the potentialities inherent in the underlying structures can be realized. This philosophy reflects Bhaskar's emancipatory view that if social scientists produce credible theories which question and criticize the beliefs of social actors, there is then a moral imperative to suggest action that might transform the false belief (Blaikie, 2007, p.148). It also seems to share the assumptions behind Habermas's idea of liberating people from the false consciousness imposed by powerful interests (Blaikie, 2007; Burr, 2003). Research therefore becomes a process of identifying the 'action spaces' accommodated by the material and historical circumstances and structures (empirical or actual) and mechanisms (real) in which individuals find themselves. By sharing the analysis of the process, meanings and underlying structures with participants in group discussions, there is a possibility of increasing participants' 'control over the circumstances which govern the quality of their lives' (Willig, 1999, p.49). This might in turn offer future possibilities for further contributions to academic knowledge.

3.2.2 Researcher's stance

Blaikie (2007) suggests that the researcher has three key choices to make about the relationship between the researcher and the researched. First is the choice between insider and outsider or impartial observer: I regard myself as an insider, immersed in the situation, and using my personal experiences as a basis for understanding. The second choice, between expert and learner, involves the distinction between imposing concepts on the subjects, and revealing the subjects' own understandings: my aim is the latter. Thirdly, in terms of my relationship with the research participants, I regard myself as standing outside of Blaikie's characterization as 'on, for or with people': since my stance is emancipatory, I see my role as helping participants to understand their situation, as well as moving beyond it – a role which Blaikie describes as 'reflective partner'.

3.2.3 Research strategy

Working within a critical realist paradigm, I do not believe it is possible for a researcher to avoid their preconceptions and pre-existing theoretical knowledge, so a cyclical or spiral research strategy or logic of inquiry (Blaikie, 2007) is appropriate to the ontological and epistemological assumptions outlined above.

Van de Ven (2007) suggests that building a theory requires a retroductive or abductive strategy, which starts with the observation of an anomaly or unexpected phenomenon (in my case the mismatch between stated working-hours preferences and actuality, and the occupational downgrading of part-timers) and involves creative or intuitive reasoning from the observation to a new theory. By reflecting on the taken-for-granted, it is possible to discover new meanings and theories. The abductive strategy privileges 'the meanings and interpretations, the motives and intentions that people use in their everyday lives, and which direct their behaviour' (Blaikie, 2007, p.90). By starting with the insider's view, and with a deep knowledge of the group being studied, the researcher can understand the language and concepts of that group (Giddens, 1976, in Blaikie, 2007, p.96). Rather than imposing the researcher's concepts and meanings, the abductive strategy then moves lay descriptions of social phenomena into technical descriptions based on social scientific knowledge.

This logic of enquiry is helpful for emancipatory social science (Harre, in Blaikie, 2007): the accounts of the social actors themselves might inform the intuitive or creative process of discovering new theories. Particularly by looking at the accounts of under-represented minorities (such as part-timers), it may be possible to identify different theories, which might in turn be helpful for other workers (e.g. full-timers). However, it is important not to contradict people's own language and the meanings they give to their actions.

3.3 Research design

3.3.1 Exploratory research

The literature review outlined in chapter 2 revealed that the academic field of part-time professionals remains fragmented and under-theorized, and narrowed the research design to a qualitative study which explored the working-hours constraints and 'choices' of both men and women, in the private sector, and in different national cultures. However, since the literature suggested constraints at national, sectoral, organizational and group level, the level of analysis was not yet clear, suggesting that a broad exploratory research question would be appropriate, with the aim of identifying both constraints and facilitators in the particular contexts chosen. The exploratory research question was therefore: What are the barriers and enablers of reduced-load working for managers and professionals?

Although the temporal flexibility literature touched on work redesign, and there were calls for further research on work redesign rather than the demographics and motivations of part-timers themselves (Kossek, Lewis and Hammer, 2010), my literature review had failed to find any *theoretical* overlap between models of job design (which tend to focus on how job characteristics influence the job-holder's motivation, and therefore their performance) and part-time working in the academic literature. I therefore started the exploratory study with no particular theoretical focus, although informed by a wide variety of different theories from the literature, which are explained in section 3.3.2. One further aim of the exploratory research was therefore to identify the most relevant theoretical approach.

Exploratory research methods

This section explains how the principle of maximum variation (Miles and Huberman, 1994) was used to select the organizational and national research contexts, and the participants. I aimed to identify a wide variety of barriers and

enablers of part-time working, and to establish which ones were common to all the different contexts and individuals.

At the country level, Finland provides an example of the Nordic social model where the state encourages equal participation in both paid (market) and unpaid (domestic) work for men and women, and also takes responsibility for the cost of family, while the UK adheres to the Anglo model of market regulation of workforce participation, voluntarist legislation, and children as a private responsibility (Kvande, 2009; Merilainen et al., 2004; Lewis and Campbell, 2008).

At the organizational level, a management consultancy ('PS'), provided a long-hours context, while an engineering company ('EngCo'), was chosen for its positive encouragement of PT working. PS was able to provide interviewees in both Finland and the UK, but EngCo was only able to offer UK-based interviewees: I decided to go with this situation since EngCo provided such a market-leading example of encouragement of part-time and also had easy access to male part-timers, which PS had struggled to find. I began with interviews with HR or Diversity directors in all three contexts, to get a feel for organizational and national contexts. Participants were then selected by purposive sampling, with the help of the HR or Diversity directors: maximum variation was sought in the reasons for working PT, job function and %FTE (full-time-equivalent). In total, ten part-timers were interviewed, five men and five women (details are in Appendix A) and a further five interviews were conducted with managers and colleagues of the part-timers.

Data collection was via semi-structured interviews, and initial questions were open, in order to allow themes to emerge. Data analysis began with a 'general accounting scheme' (Miles and Huberman, 1994) of non-content-specific codes which were used as the basis for the inductive development of codes. I started with four very broad levels of analysis – institutional, organizational, work group (including the perceived 'nature' of the work in the occupational sector) and individual. Findings were shared with participants and with the sponsoring directors in writing, and I also presented the findings to the senior HR partner

and flexible working champion at PS UK, and discussed them with the HR business partner responsible for flexible working at EngCo. These discussions particularly highlighted the perceived conflict between business and individual needs, and the narrative of individual responsibility for resolving that conflict.

A strong theme which emerged during analysis of the interviews was that 'making part-time work' might take some time, and involved negotiation of the job role and feedback messages from the context. Once this concept of 'process over time' had been identified, the coding was revised again, and fell into two very broad categories of 'people' and 'work', with institutional, organizational and work group themes forming the context for the process.

Findings of exploratory research

Three findings from the exploratory research informed the focus of the main study: part-time as a process which develops over time; the 'nature' of the work and the implications for identity.

A traditional approach to the study of retention PT workers is that certain categories of worker, particularly working mothers, make personal choices about working hours, whether constrained or not, as a previous, separate stage from implementing PT working: the organization's role is framed as *responding* to requests for PT working (Lee et al., 2000). The first finding which emerged from these interviews was an alternative conceptualization of the creation of a PTWA, in which an ongoing negotiation results in the development *over time* of a functioning working arrangement. Many of the details of the arrangement (volume and schedule of work, degree of flexibility of boundaries, volume of outputs) were worked out between the individual and their work group, clients and line manager, with the organizational and institutional contexts providing a continuous feedback loop during the process.

The second finding concerns the 'nature' of managerial and professional work. Even for those working in encouraging organizational or institutional contexts, the nature of the work might be perceived as an immovable obstacle. One

constraining concept was perceived to be professional responsibility, which was binary: you either were responsible or you weren't, whatever the number of hours you worked. Various characteristics of work were perceived to impact on the feasibility, and design, of a PT professional job. These dimensions of work were seen as intrinsic and immutable, and were combined in different ways in different jobs.

The pace of work constrained opportunities for part-time where an immediate response to clients was required, where project timescales were short, or where the job required providing daily deliverables to a client. When work was driven by unpredictable external events, planning a part-time schedule became harder. Thirdly, a part-timer might miss out on significant information if their work was interdependent with others, particularly if the work was fast-paced, or if they worked a low %FTE. By contrast, those who worked alone created the rhythm of their own work. The quantity of information the individual needed to process – often transferred via meetings, email, phone calls – was another barrier. Part-timers needed to maintain their professional knowledge at the same rate as full-timers to perform their job effectively – and the definition of what was needed to do the job effectively was calibrated to the full-timer's rate of development.

As a result of these barriers, most of the part-timers in this study accepted lower pay, and responsibility for full-time-equivalent deliverables, in exchange for time off during the 'normal' working week which was to a greater or lesser extent 'guilt-free'.

The third finding concerned the implications of a transition to part-time for professional identity. In some contexts, participants described a process of identity change which amounted to being 'a different person' after the transition to PT, while others found it necessary to stake a claim for being 'still the same person'. The transition to PT work might have significant implications for work identity (career, professional, organizational) and, for those simultaneously taking on new non-work roles, for personal and social identity: one participant described part-time working mothers as 'lost souls'.

Loss of work identity was particularly strong in a long-hours environment like PS UK, where the 'nature of the work' was perceived to preclude part-time working, so that anyone who wanted to work less would have to do a different kind of work. On the other hand, those at PS Finland used a different discourse, in which part-timers were not seen as a separate category of professional. In terms of career identity, the discourse was again different in different individual and organizational contexts. Some only felt comfortable making the transition to PT at a later life stage, after career ambition had been fulfilled, and professional identity and organizational credibility were well-established. A second group, maybe at an earlier life stage and including mothers, took an unhurried approach to career, conceptualizing part-time working as only a temporary break on career progress, while a third group, particularly those in a long-hours environment such as PS UK, were assumed to have selected themselves out of professional jobs, and therefore any claim on the career track: in this situation, the transition to part-time was read as a 'choice' to step back from career and focus on other things (usually assumed to be motherhood).

3.3.2 Explorations of theories of part-time working

A theory is 'the mental image or conceptual framework that is brought to bear on the research problem' (Van de Ven, 2007, p.19). Before starting the exploratory study, my theoretical position was uncertain: in this section, I describe how the exploratory study clarified the need for a process approach, and therefore two other theories which would help to build a coherent research study: first, theories of identity construction, and secondly theories of job- and work-design.

Process theory

First and most importantly, the exploratory research highlighted the idea of part-time working as a process which happened over time, rather than a single

personal choice followed by a single event (the transition to part-time). A process approach to the research therefore seemed appropriate. Process and variance approaches to research are fundamentally different (Langley, 2009). While 'what' questions are suited to a variance model, 'how' questions 'require narratives explaining an observed sequence of events in terms of a plot or an underlying generative mechanism that has the power to cause events to happen in the real world and the particular circumstances or contingencies that occur when these mechanisms operate' (Van de Ven, 2007, p. 145). My aim was to build a process theory of the development of a part-time working arrangement for managers and professionals. This required understanding the definitions of, and meanings attributed to, the part-time arrangement, and the impact of personal identity and the nature of the work, as well as the wider context, on those meanings.

A second attraction of process research is that it is highly relevant to practice, because it creates 'actionable' knowledge, that is, knowledge about how to get from A to B, and therefore offers the possibility of improving research participants' situations (Langley, 2009). This accords with my practitioner starting point, my emancipatory search for 'action spaces' for research participants (Willig, 1999), and my stance on the relationship between researcher and researched, which I see as 'reflective partner' (Blaikie, 2007), helping participants to move beyond their current situation.

Theories about work and work design

When I began the literature review, I had expected to find an overlap between models of job design and part-time working, but I failed to do so. Barley and Kunda (2001) argue that in the past 50 years, organizational theorists have neglected the study of work, with the result that some concepts have 'ossified': they note the tendency to underestimate the degree to which job roles are 'dynamic and behavioral' and their components are 'negotiated and renegotiated in the flow of activity'. They note that

By studying situated rather than idealized roles, organizational theorists could revitalize our appreciation of how roles link work to forms of organizing (Barley and Kunda, 2001, p.89).

In other words, although job roles represent structural expectations, they are also open to interpretation by individuals or groups of individuals who may create an 'equifinal' work design, described by Sinha and Van de Ven (2005) as an equally effective work design for a different context. They suggest that such alternative work designs need more detailed study, and the development of new models.

One of the rapidly changing elements in the professional and managerial workforce is its gender balance, but little attempt has been made to redesign work, jobs and working practices to suit those with family or other caring responsibilities: instead, the norm for managers and professionals remains jobs which are designed for (male) 'ideal workers' who rely on a (female) partner providing unpaid domestic and family work (Acker, 1990), while the norm for those who want to work differently, or work less, is to suffer stigmatization (Williams et al., 2013).

The following definition of work design is provided by Sinha and van de Ven (2005, p.390):

Work design is defined as the system of arrangements and procedures for organizing work. Work design is distinguished from job design in that the "redesigning of work leads beyond individual jobs to the organization of groups of workers, and beyond that to the organization of support services" (Trist 1981, p.42). We view work as consisting of the set of activities that are undertaken to develop, produce, and deliver a product – that is, a physical and/or information good and service.

As mentioned in the literature review, Perlow (2001; 2009) and Briscoe (2007) have suggested some alternative working practices which increase temporal flexibility; others (Rapoport et al., 2002; Fletcher and Bailyn, 2005) have suggested an approach to work design at the group level which improves work-

life balance; and two relevant models have focused on reduced face time (Van Dyne et al., 2007) and increasing organizational membership (Lawrence and Corwin, 2003). Perlow and Kelly (2014, p.126) conclude that work redesign at the team level (using ROWE or Results Only Work Environment, and PTO or Predictability, Teaming and Open communication) offers greater opportunity for flexibility than the prevalent individual 'accommodation' model, because it aims to 'disrupt the structure of work' so that flexible workers are no longer marginalized or stigmatized.

However, top-down theories of work redesign conflict with the perception that part-time is not an organization-led activity (Lee et al., 2000; Dick, 2004; Dick, 2009). There appears to be no coherent theory of how, or in what ways, an *individual* might redesign their team's working practices to develop a PTWA – a significant knowledge gap when it seems that part-timers (unlike other types of flexible workers, who may sometimes benefit from organizational encouragement) are usually left to develop their own working arrangements individually (Meiksins and Whalley, 2002; Lee et al., 2000; Lee and Kossek, 2005).

Job design theories tend to focus on how job characteristics influence the job-holder's motivation, and therefore their performance (Grant and Parker, 2009; Oldham and Hackman, 2010). Perhaps the most relevant theory to my research, incorporating the idea of a process over time but stressing the role of the individual in adapting their work to suit themselves, is the model of job crafting, which is defined as 'the physical and cognitive changes individuals make in the task or relational boundaries of their work' (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001 p.179). Although not specific to the field of part-time working, the theory suggests that employees have varying degrees of freedom to craft their work to benefit themselves, and this lens offers the possibility of loosening the apparently fixed definition of 'a job' to make it something more dynamic and, in some circumstances, more within the control of the individual employee. The emphasis on change over time, and the proactive stance of the employee, seem highly relevant to what the part-timers in my study were trying to achieve.

Clegg and Spencer (2007) to some extent build on the job crafting concept, by proposing another process model which suggests that job design is dynamic and changes over time. Departing from traditional job design models, they suggest that job design is a circular (rather than uni-directional) process in which job characteristics may be an outcome of job performance or motivation, as well as a predictor. Departing from Wrzesniewski and Dutton (2001), they suggest that job design involves the job-holder in some level of negotiation with colleagues and supervisor – and also speculate that customers might have a role in the crafting of customer-facing jobs. These ideas were all reflected in my exploratory research. Clegg and Spencer propose that job-holders can earn the right to craft their jobs through high performance, perceptions of competence (by self and others), and trust: however their frame of reference appears to be that job-holders in these circumstances would naturally act to expand their roles and take on more responsibility. Nothing is said about a circumstance in which the individual may want to ‘earn’ the right to work less. So although there are tangential links, the fit with the transition to part-time working is not precise.

The concept of i-deals, originally used to refer to individually negotiated *employment terms*, has been developed to connect with the study of *work design* (Hornung et al., 2008). I-deals refer to idiosyncratic jobs, which are created for and around a specific individual: deals done before employment (ex ante i-deals) are different from ex post i-deals done with serving employees (Rousseau et al., 2006). A further distinction is between ‘flexibility i-deals’ which involve freedom in scheduling, and developmental i-deals, which provide learning and growth: the flexibility i-deal is correlated with lower levels of work-family conflict (Hornung et al., 2008). The most recent study (Hornung et al., 2010) focuses on a sub-set of developmental i-deals, but highlights both the perceptions of *authority* to craft, and the *acceptance* of such crafting by peers, manager and organization: these concepts might have some explanatory power in relation to part-time working arrangements.

Theories about people

The exploratory study had clarified that the part-time working arrangement was perceived to be the personal choice and responsibility of the individual part-timer or, in some cases, the part-timer and their manager. However, the part-timers also spoke of strong constraints in their environment, at individual, work group, organizational, sectoral and societal level. Looking back at the decisions I made at this stage in the process, it seems to me that my emancipatory leanings, together with these constraints identified in my exploratory research, made me reluctant to accept an account of part-time work which uncritically accepted part-time working as an entirely individual phenomenon. Any theory of working-hours choices or preferences which ignores the context, such as Hakim's (2002) preference theory, which states that people have free choices about the hours they work, and many women choose part-time work because they prefer to give time to domestic and caring commitments, seems to me to be missing half the story. Many others agree: preference theory has been widely criticized (McRae, 2003; McDonald et al., 2006; Lane, 2004) for underestimating the influence of context on people's 'free' choices.

Yet Hakim's preference theory remains one of the few attempts to theorize about the mechanisms which drive working-hours choices. My exploratory research led me to two other theories which seemed relevant, although they had not been applied specifically to part-time working: process models of identity and psychological contract theory.

Psychological contract theory refers to beliefs about the exchange between individual and organization (Rousseau, 2004). The 'arrangement' as conceptualized above relates to the psychological contract in terms of both the idea of multiple contract makers (the organization as well as top managers and immediate boss are sources of information for the contract; Dick, 2006) and the idea that psychological contracts can change over time. The contract serves as a 'mental model' of the employment arrangement: in situations of change, such as the transition to part-time, mismatches between individual and the other contract makers may arise: in my context, such mismatches may relate to

volume and scheduling of work (such as when one party to the contract expects part-time workers to work fixed hours, and another expects flexibility), boundaries (for example if the boss assumes that the part-timer will be happy to take phone calls or emails when not working during 'normal' working hours), the volume of outputs (if a part-timer is working 80%FTE, should they still deliver 100%FTE?) and acceptable 'reasons' for working part-time (e.g. it's OK for mothers to work part-time, but not those who want to pursue a hobby).

While psychological contract theory might have some relevance in terms of *describing* part-timers' situation, I speculate that identity theory might have a greater *explanatory* power. Identity work is heightened following a trigger episode or identity threat (Ashforth et al., 2008; Alvesson et al., 2008) and process models of identity (Ibarra, 1999; Ibarra and Barbulescu, 2010) have been applied to understanding the identity changes implicit in work role transitions. The theory (Ibarra and Barbulescu, 2010) is that 'narrating oneself' happens in a context which may or may not validate the particular story being told: if the story is validated, it is 'more likely to be retained and embellished for future use. Otherwise, the person will seek alternative narrative material.' (Ibarra and Barbulescu, 2010, p.148). Successful role transitions are likely to involve 'plausible or consistent narratives' which help the narrator to enter into a new group, while discordant or conflicting narratives may result in an incomplete or failed entry into the group. Although not every professional transfers to a more junior role on transition to part-time, some transitions would certainly fit into the category of 'demotions' (e.g. the 'lost souls' at PS UK); other part-timers may find it harder to create plausible narratives which are consistent with career, professional or organizational membership identities. This in turn will have an impact on the individual's ability to negotiate a PTWA.

3.3.3 Developing the research question

The exploratory research study not only informed the theoretical underpinnings of the main research study, but also defined the phenomenon of interest, which led ultimately to a refined research question.

The exploratory study confined the phenomenon of interest to the 'arrangement' and highlighted that the 'inner context' for the arrangement included the nature of the work itself, and the individual's identity construction. The 'outer context' was confirmed as the work group, organization, sector and society (e.g. organizational culture, attitudes of boss and colleagues, gender roles in society). By framing the phenomenon of interest as the 'arrangement' rather than the person, I aimed to separate out the data on people (identity) and work (the arrangement), thereby avoiding the uncritical assumption that the arrangement is 'caused' by personal preference, and that the responsibility for negotiating and defining this arrangement automatically lies with the individual, rather than the organization, the team, the manager, or indeed the wider society. However, at the same time, the arrangement cannot exist independently of the individual, so an understanding of the meaning of part-time for that individual is important in understanding the arrangement. If the unit of analysis is the part-time arrangement, rather than the part-time person, the focus shifts to the relationship between the person and the society, sector and organization they are part of, as well as the nature of the work they do, and the working practices of the team around them. This account of part-time work highlights that the arrangement is contracted or agreed *between* the person doing the part-time job and their boss, team and organization, rather than belonging only to the individual.

In terms of constructing a process theory of the development of a part-time working arrangement, it appeared from the exploratory research that two types of theory would be needed. From the perspective of the work itself, job crafting (Wrzesniewski and Dutton, 2001), and insights from Clegg and Spencer's model (2007) might be the most promising theories going forward. From the perspective of the people doing the work, identity process theories such as

provisional selves (Ibarra, 1999) and identity as narrative (Ibarra and Barbulescu, 2010) might shed some light on the interrelationships between this process of identity reconstruction and job (re)design. These are process theories, combining the key elements of 'work' and 'people', although none has been applied specifically to the context of part-time work. It appeared plausible that combining job design/crafting theories with identity theories might provide a more comprehensive and plausible explanation of the phenomenon of interest (Greenwood and Miller, 2010).

By framing the question in terms of the arrangement 'emerging' and 'developing', rather than the more personal 'choosing' to work part-time based on 'preferences' or personal responsibility for solving the organizational 'problem' of part-time working, again I intend to shift the focus from the individual to the wider context (Dick and Hyde, 2006) and to allow the starting point of the process, and the resources the individual has to draw on for identity construction, to be located in either or both of the inner context (the individual and the work itself) and the outer context (the work group, organization, sector and society). This is in keeping with a critical realist approach which doesn't assume intention or agency and allows that the arrangement is to some extent constrained by the options the individual perceives to be available.

My emancipatory leanings (see section 3.2.1) predisposed me towards taking a positive approach towards how a PTWA emerges and develops, enabling people to avoid over-employment in a long-hours culture, rather than focusing on the barriers to making it happen (as suggested by Kossek, Lewis and Hammer, 2010). By studying what has changed, rather than what has not changed, in part-time work, I wanted to contribute to a 'redefinition of central assumptions' in the work-life field (Smithson and Stokoe, 2005, p.165) and avoid entrenching those discourses of work which stigmatize part-timers (Williams et al., 2013). The research question was therefore:

- How and why does a part-time working arrangement (PTWA) for managers and professionals emerge and develop?

Subquestions were:

- How is a part-time working arrangement defined? What elements does it involve? (It is provisionally defined to include volume and schedule of work, flexibility of work-home boundaries, and volume of outputs – ie full-time-equivalent outputs or some %FTE).
- What are the start and end points of the process of development of a part-time arrangement, and the events or situations that make up that process?
- How is the development of the arrangement influenced by the inner context of the individual (their personal identity and the meanings they attribute to the arrangement) and the work itself?
- How is the development of the arrangement influenced by the outer context of the work group, organization, sector, and society – and the meanings attributed to the arrangement by the various actors?

These questions, I hoped, would also contribute to a better understanding of over-employment and suggest ways in which quality part-time jobs might be achieved.

3.4 Research methods

Edmondson & McManus (2007) propose that methodology needs to fit the state of previous research and management theory in any particular field: theory might be nascent, mature, or somewhere in between (intermediate). Nascent theory 'proposes tentative answers to novel questions of how and why, often merely suggesting new connections among phenomena' (Edmondson & McManus, 2007, p.1158). I would suggest that part-time working for professionals is one such field, representing as it does a relatively new phenomenon, and as yet having attracted relatively little coherent theory.

A qualitative approach is chosen for this study, because, as Edmondson & McManus (2007, p.1177) suggest, 'the less that is known about a phenomenon in the organizational literature, the more likely exploratory qualitative research

will be a fruitful strategy.’ The data required to answer the research question concerns both the process of development of a PT working arrangement (including the start and end points, and the events that make up the process), and the meanings of that arrangement. As suggested above, the arrangement is realized within an inner context (the individual and their identity construction processes, and the nature of the work itself) and an outer context (work group, organization, sector, society), so an understanding of these contexts is also required. It is suggested that interviews are more appropriate than observation because the phenomenon is episodic, and involves the reconstruction of past events over a considerable period of time, which it is not feasible to observe (Bryman, 2007).

Interviews also have a unique strength in accessing the internal life of participants (Langley, 2009); the research question requires rich or thick descriptions of part-timers’ interpretations, feelings and beliefs about their part-time arrangement, as well as the process by which they achieved it. According to Kvale (1996, p. 105) interviews are a suitable method for ‘studying people’s understanding of the meanings in their lived world, describing their experiences and self-understanding, and clarifying and elaborating their own perspective on their lived world’.

The semi-structured interview is appropriate for this emerging field, because while it provides a framework of themes and questions, it is also open to new themes which emerge during the interaction, and changes in sequence prompted by the interviewees’ answers. The researcher is able to prompt participants to explain and develop issues that arise. In keeping with my social constructionist epistemology, I believe that the interview is neither neutral nor objective and the knowledge which emerges from the dialogue is necessarily a product of its time and place. Information about part-time working arrangements is not located ‘out there’ in the social world, or in people’s attitudes and beliefs, ready to be excavated or ‘mined’ (Kvale, 1996), but rather is co-constructed by researcher and participant. Since interviewees may

construct themselves in particular ways, or project certain images, this is an important part of the evidence, as are my own preconceptions and beliefs.

Interviews enable participants to reflect back on their experience but as Van de Ven (2007, p.208) points out, the attempt to understand a process retrospectively carries an inherent danger that knowledge of the outcome (the development of a part-time arrangement) may encourage interviewees to 'filter out events that do not fit or that render the story less coherent'. Interviews can also be accused of putting too much emphasis on individual agency and rationality (Mason, 2002). It is therefore important to 'organize the asking and the listening so as to create the best conditions for the construction of meaningful knowledge...One way is to ask the interviewee to recount or narrate relevant situations, contexts and events so they can effectively construct or reconstruct [the phenomenon of interest] in the interview setting' (Mason, 2002, p.227). In other words, the grounding of the phenomenon of interest in specific narratives and contexts helps to articulate the phenomenon, and the (possibly messy or incoherent) process, and to avoid filtering or over-rationalization. Two techniques to improve this grounding are further defined below: narrative and critical incident, allowing focus on, respectively, the *process* of development of a part-time arrangement and the *meanings* of the part-time arrangement for managers and professionals, particularly in terms of their identity.

Interviews also require the researcher to build trust and a relationship with research participants. Kvale (1996) suggests that the first stage of designing an interview study is 'thematizing' by which he means a deep knowledge of the phenomenon, and also knowledge of the culture, in order to be able to ask relevant and searching questions. Establishing myself as someone who was already immersed in, and knowledgeable about, the topic of part-time working and the situation of the participants, was necessary to encourage a rich conversation, and essential for understanding the meaning of what participants say and do (Giddens, in Blaikie, 2007, p.96). My personal experience placed me as an 'insider' in relation to the research participants, but also a 'learner'

about their situation (Blaikie, 2007). I will explain below how I dealt with each of these issues.

3.4.1 Sampling strategy

Van de Ven (2007) suggests four guidelines for selecting cases in process research, in order to ensure the fullest understanding of events or constructs, and identification of the boundaries of the process: extreme situations; polar types; high experience levels; and an informed choice of sites which will help to increase access. Given that part-time professionals are a stigmatized minority in most workplaces (Dick and Hyde, 2006; Williams et al., 2013; Hoque and Kirkpatrick, 2003), extreme situations needed to include those countries and organizations which have positively encouraged part-time work.

Extreme situations and polar types were demonstrated by the two different social models represented by the UK and the Netherlands, and by the two different organizations: PSF is at the forefront of encouraging part-time, while InfoCo, although encouraging flexibility in general, had done more in practice to support flexible location and flexible full-time hours than to support part-time work.

Selecting countries

I was looking for extreme situations and polar types. The Netherlands has been described as ‘the first part-time economy’, has a higher proportion of part-timers in the workforce than any other European country (Visser, 2002), and a strong legislative encouragement for part-time working (Visser, 2002; Plantenga et al., 1999; Den Dulk et al., 2011). The UK, on the other hand, despite a relatively high proportion of part-timers in the workforce as a whole, has fewer ‘quality’ part-time jobs, and a more cautious approach to flexible working, emphasizing the importance of the business case for part-time work and ‘earning’ the right to flexible working on merit (Tomlinson, 2007).

In the Netherlands, there is a society-wide acceptance of both the need for, and the naturalness of, part-time, especially for parents: indeed there is a widely accepted 'moral' case for part-time, based on the concept that part-time is the 'right thing to do' for mothers, and, to a much lesser degree, for fathers (den Dulk et al 2011). Since 2000, legislation has supported part-time (80%) work for all workers, while in the UK there is merely a right to request flexible working, and a culture which often regards part-time as uncommercial and inconvenient. There is often an organizational presumption against part-time in the UK – a presumption that part-time is difficult, expensive, and a burden on colleagues and the organization (Dick, 2009; Smithson and Stokoe, 2005) – unless the individual can make a convincing case in favour. In the Netherlands, the emerging climate is a presumption in favour of part-time as a 'normal' way of working, upheld in law. Requests for part-time are only rejected in extremely rare circumstances in very small organizations, and certainly not in multinationals such as PSF and InfoCo (Visser, 2002; den Dulk et al., 2011). A further right which both parents are separately entitled to in the Netherlands is 26 weeks of parental leave (in addition to paid maternity leave): this highly flexible entitlement to time off may be taken as one day off per week over a period of several years. Six of the 18 Dutch participants in this study (four mothers, two fathers) were taking parental leave in the form of part-time working, although part-time remained strongly associated with motherhood in both countries, even to the extent that mothers who did full-time paid work were the exception.

Both countries operate the 'one-and-a-half earner' household as the dominant norm (Tang and Cousins, 2005; den Dulk et al., 2011) and women retain more responsibility for domestic and family work (Tang & Cousins, 2005) but in the Netherlands the government rhetoric has since the late 1990s encouraged an equal division of paid and unpaid labour within households, and the equalization of care work between men and women (Plantenga et al., 1999).

Selecting organizations

In order to fulfil the criteria of the research design, I was looking for organizations which a) had operations in both the UK and a part-time-friendly country in Scandinavia or the Netherlands; and b) supported and encouraged flexible working at a level beyond policy. The latter was important because my aim was to study how the phenomenon of interest (the PTWA) emerged and developed – in other words, the circumstances which enabled it to happen, as well as the constraints – and a reasonably-sized and varied pool of part-timers was a prerequisite.

The criterion of ‘support and encouragement for flexible working’ was initially identified through lists such as the Working Families awards finalists and ‘top 20 employers’, HR magazine’s Most Influential Practitioners, the workingmums.co.uk Top Employers, the employers who participated in the government’s Agile Future Forum, and the Women Like Us Power Part-time List. However, since these lists often contain employers which have good flexible working policies on paper, but are short on a supportive culture and managers (and therefore in practice remain fairly hostile to flexible working), I also used my own and my supervisor’s networks, and my own previous experience (an informed choice of sites), to ascertain before approaching them that they supported flexible working in practice as well as in theory. I wanted to approach senior, and influential, people within the organizations, because my research philosophy follows Bhaskar’s (2011) view that social scientists have a moral imperative to suggest action that may transform false belief (Blaikie, 2007) and provide ‘action spaces’ (Willig, 1999) which participants may wish to follow up on. I therefore approached each organization via networking, so none of the approaches was ‘cold’. I approached eight organizations before finding InfoCo, and then PSF.

InfoCo is a global public limited IT company, headquartered in the USA. PSF is a global professional services firm with a partnership structure. Both are long-hours organizations (a recent investigation at InfoCo had revealed that the *average* working hours were nearly 60 hours per week), and both have been at

the forefront of encouraging flexible working. However, InfoCo is a male-dominated, engineering-led organization which has focused on (full-time) flexible hours and flexible location, while PSF, whose flexible working agenda has been motivated by the retention of female talent at higher levels in the firm, has focused on all three kinds of flexibility (flexible location, flexible hours, and reduced hours) but more especially on supporting (mostly female) part-time employees.

Selecting participants

At the individual level, Pettigrew's four guidelines for selecting cases in process research (1990, in van de Ven, 2007) were also applied: extreme situations, polar types, high experience levels and, as shown above, an informed choice of sites. Polar types were selected in terms of: gender; reasons for working part-time (taking care to include those working PT for non-childcare reasons); %FTE; and, as far as possible within the two organizations selected, different occupations, and different locations (within each country/organization, to avoid exclusive focus on London- or Amsterdam-based Head Office employees). Extreme situations involved choosing unusual cases (such as those working PT for unusual reasons, and those in 'difficult' jobs or occupations), critically important and highly visible cases (such as senior or male part-timers).

In terms of experience levels, most of the sample had a long experience of PTWAs (see below), but a few who had made the transition recently were selected, since a different perspective (and therefore theoretical insights) might come from those whose transition to part-time is more recent.

Each of the two organizations was asked to randomly select part-time professionals and managers in both the UK and the Netherlands, giving four research sites in total (InfoCo UK, InfoCo Netherlands, PSF UK, PSF Netherlands). Forty participants were selected from a total of 76 volunteers (a 25% response rate from 307 invitations to participate): the enthusiasm for participation may suggest that PT is more of an issue for individuals than for

organizations. At InfoCo, the internal sponsor of the research was the Director of Inclusion, Diversity and Sustainability, EMEA: she contacted 23 part-timers personally (using an email written by me), which brought 10 UK and 6 Dutch part-timers – a 70% response rate; since all the Dutch group were women, I used snowball sampling to find two Dutch male participants. At PSF the internal sponsor was the Director of Diversity and Inclusive Leadership, EMEA: she passed the request (and the email written by me) to her team members in the UK and the Netherlands, who contacted, respectively, 84 and 200 part-timers (the latter being the result of a miscommunication in which the Dutch D&I manager sent the email to all Dutch part-timers rather than a random sample). In total, 44 of the 284 PSF invitees volunteered to participate, a 16% response rate. The discrepancy in response rates may be explained by the extreme busy-ness of the PSF workforce (the sponsoring director had warned me not to take up too much of their time), and the fact that the call for participation at InfoCo went out directly from the Director of Inclusion, Diversity and Sustainability, who knew all the part-time workers personally (since there were fewer of them), while at PSF, the call for participation came from a more junior member of the Diversity team.

I had expected that all the participants would be 'retention' part-timers transitioning from full-time to part-time work, since this is the most common way to get a professional part-time job (Tomlinson, 2004; Dick, 2009). However, in fact many of the volunteers had moved into their current part-time job from another (internal or external) part-time job, possibly because my research sites were organizations which are at the forefront of flexible working practices, and are therefore using flexible working not just as a retention strategy but as an attraction and retention strategy. This was a change from my original sampling strategy; however, the inclusion of some part-timers who negotiated their arrangement before they were employed, and others who moved internally from another part-time job, in addition to those transitioning from full-time to part-time within the same job, added to the richness of the data, and potentially its generalizability, since some participants had experienced several different processes of developing different part-time jobs. The implications of this

change for identifying the start of the process of development of the job are discussed in section 4.1, and the implications for negotiating workload are discussed in section 4.4.4.

3.4.2 Sample demographics

Because one of the interviews failed to record (although the interviewee did attend the feedback session), the final sample contained 39 people; 18 were from InfoCo and 21 from PSF. Seventeen participants were Dutch and 22 British. There were 27 women and 12 men: the over-sampling of male part-timers relative to the part-time population was because I was looking for polar types and extreme cases (Pettigrew, in Van de Ven, 2007) rather than a representative sample.

A 4-day or 80% working arrangement was by far the most popular option, although other arrangements were as follows:

%FTE	Number of participants
60%	8 (2 of whom were job-sharing)
70%	3
80%	25
90%	2
'Short' full-time ¹	1

Table 1 Participants by %FTE.

The sample was very experienced in working part-time, with roughly a third having worked part-time for more than 10 years, and another third for 5-10 years:

¹ 'Short' full-time refers to Jeroen, at InfoCo Netherlands, who wanted to work part-time, but ended up remaining on a full-time salary but reducing his hours to the 40 per week which were in his contract, as opposed to the 60 per week he was working previously, and which were typical for InfoCo employees.

Number of years working part-time	Number of participants
More than 10 years	13
5-10 years	14
2-5 years	6
1-2 years	5
< 1 year	1

Table 2 Participants by years of experience working part-time

The research interviews were conducted at different points in each individual's journey towards the development of their *current* PTWA: some had only been in their current job for a few months, while others had been in post for several years.

Locations, job roles and job grades

The locations of the participants were deliberately varied, in order to minimize any bias towards Head Office or big-city staff.

Company/country	Number and locations of participants
InfoCo UK	10: Manchester, Hounslow, Slough, London
InfoCo Netherlands	8: Amsterdam
PSF UK	11: London, Liverpool, Manchester, Jersey
PSF Netherlands	10: Amsterdam, The Hague, Rotterdam, Utrecht

Table 3 Participants by location

In terms of job levels, PSF had a strict hierarchy of job grades. Graduates were employed on training contracts, and employees progressed up the ladder on a competitive basis with the successful ones making it to senior manager (the first client-management grade), then Assistant Director, Executive Director and a

few reaching partnership. The 21 PSF participants included: 5 partners or executive directors; 2 assistant directors; 9 senior managers; 5 other professional roles. At InfoCo, the system was much less rigid, and there were fewer very senior participants, because part-time was perceived as harder to achieve at higher levels in the organization. Of the 18 participants, 1 was a (divisional) director, 4 had team management roles, while 13 were project managers or described themselves as ‘individual contributors’, such as engineers, sales executives, accountants or lawyers.

As mentioned earlier, there were no strict criteria for qualifying as a manager or professional: participants self-identified as such. In terms of job function, the participants were divided as follows:

Company/country	Job function
InfoCo UK: 10 people	5 Operations (engineering, IT) 2 Business development 1 in each of HR, Finance, Marketing
InfoCo Netherlands: 8 people	3 Business development and sales 1 in each of Operations (IT), Customer services, Legal, Marketing, HR
PSF UK: 11 people	5 Tax 3 Mergers & Acquisitions 1 in each of Audit, Business development, Marketing
PSF Netherlands: 10 people	5 Tax 3 Audit 1 in each of Sustainability consulting, Operations

Table 4 Participants by job function

Motivations for working part-time

Since nearly all interviewees cited multiple reasons for working part-time, the motivations in the following table are overlapping categories. Only major

reasons are included: for example, more than four people mentioned looking after, or spending time with, elderly relatives, but only the four in the table had direct caring responsibility for them. Similarly, 'not needing the money' is an elastic category, since most participants mentioned financial issues at some point: however, the 10 people in this group described a conscious, active re-assessment of life values, which had led them to prioritize time over money. All the names are pseudonyms.

Reason	No.	Organization and name
Care of pre-school or primary-school-age children. All the 6 men also cited support for their partner's career; of the 17 women, 2 were single mothers, the others in 'one and a half' partnerships	23	InfoCo Netherlands: Anneke, Catrien, Clara, Jeroen, Nienke, Wilma InfoCo UK: Alan, Eric, Florence, Patricia, Wanda PSF Netherlands: Andre, Margreeth, Melanie, Trudy PSF UK: Adele, Alistair, Caitlin, Cassandra, Christine, Naomi, Roisin, Veronica
Not needing the money, or re-balancing time and money in their lives	10	InfoCo Netherlands: Roos, Tjarko InfoCo UK: Keith, Patsy, Wanda PSF Netherlands: Jan, Simone, Stille PSF UK: Carrie, Fiona
Health problems or accidents	8	InfoCo Netherlands: Tjarko InfoCo UK: Alan, Elinor, Eric PSF Netherlands: Arend, Marloes, Roos PSF UK: Alistair
A prelude to retirement	5	InfoCo Netherlands: Tjarko InfoCo UK: Keith PSF Netherlands: Jan, Paulus PSF UK: Phillip

Teenage or older children; had kept their part-time arrangement even though childcare was no longer a major issue	4	InfoCo UK: Natasha, Susannah PSF Netherlands: Simone PSF UK: Fiona
Care of elderly relatives (as a major motivation)	4	InfoCo UK: Keith PSF Netherlands: Melanie PSF UK: Christine, Cassandra
Re-orientation of life priorities after the death of someone close to them	2	PSF Netherlands: Jan PSF UK: Fiona
Previous employer had moved entire staff to 4 days a week; kept the arrangement on moving to current organization	2	PSF Netherlands: Melanie, Stille
Second job or own business	2	InfoCo UK: Eric PSF Netherlands: Simone

Table 5 Participants by motivation for working part-time

3.4.3 Data collection

This section covers the pilot interviews, preparing participants for interview, and the interviews themselves.

Pilot interviews

The interview process (including setting up the critical incident records and the interview schedule itself, as detailed below) was piloted with three part-timers at InfoCo: the first one was face to face, and the next two via videoconference (one in the Netherlands), because the sponsoring director at InfoCo was keen to promote videoconferencing rather than travel as part of their sustainability initiative.

The only change which resulted from the pilot interviews was that the idea of drawing a timeline was abandoned as a distraction for face to face interviews, and an impossibility for videoconference interviews. I also found the videoconferencing technology unreliable, and felt much more comfortable with the more personal connection which can be achieved face to face, so I avoided videoconference after the pilot stage as much as possible and did as many interviews as possible face to face.

Preparing participants for interviews

At InfoCo, I spoke to each interviewee in advance, to explain the purpose of the research, and ask them to keep a note of critical incidents in the 3-4 week period leading up to the interview. At PSF, the preparation for the interview was less formal: I had been explicitly asked not to take up too much of the participants' time, so instead of having a pre-interview set-up phone call and asking them to log incidents, I emailed each participant 2-4 weeks in advance of the interview, to explain the focus of the research and ask them to 'notice' situations or events when part-time became relevant. However, this made little difference to the degree of preparation between the two organizations. In each case, I introduced the research as focusing on, first, developing the part-time working arrangement; and secondly, whether and how part-time had impacted on 'your sense of yourself as a person'.

Conducting the interviews

The InfoCo data was collected between September 2012 and February 2013, and the PSF data between March and May 2013. Interviews were not time-limited; the longest was two hours, the shortest about 45 minutes, but the modal length was one hour.

The interviews were mostly conducted face to face, at the offices of the various participants, occasionally in a room booked for the purpose but more typically in

the on-site canteen or cafe. The final tally was 29 face to face; 7 by phone; 3 by videoconference, as follows:

Company/country	Location of interviews
InfoCo UK	9 face to face, 1 videoconference
InfoCo Netherlands	6 face to face, 2 videoconference
PSF UK	7 face to face, 4 phone
PSF Netherlands	7 face to face, 3 phone

Table 6 Location of interviews

In each interview, I introduced myself as someone with practical knowledge and experience as a flexible working consultant, and as someone who had experience of running a business, and therefore didn't come to this topic with a naïve or un-business-like 'rights-based' approach. This was in keeping with my stance as an insider; but I was also careful to position myself as a learner not an expert, and to make it clear that I was interested to hear their perspective and experience, not impose my own. Van de Ven (2007, p.293) emphasizes that 'candid information comes not only with familiarity and trust, but also with more knowledgeable and penetrating probes in responses to questions.' I also positioned myself as someone who, as a mother of two children and a part-timer myself, understood the difficulties of combining high-pressure work with a personal hinterland, and of constructing a feasible part-time job: I felt this was important in terms of establishing trust and encouraging openness about non-work life, especially since the interviews were taking place in corporate surroundings in which discussion of personal lives might have been frowned upon. However, I was also careful to make it clear that this research wasn't about mothers; that I was interested in the development of the part-time arrangement, regardless of the reasons for it.

After establishing my own position in the research by explaining the background to the research and my own interest in the topic, I invited each participant to

briefly describe their job, and then we moved into the two sections of the interview: a narrative timeline and a discussion of critical incidents.

As a 'reflective partner' in the interview, I was conscious that I had to guard against slipping into coaching or consulting mode when asking questions. This was a constant thought process for me: because of my background in flexible working consultancy, I had to resist the temptation to offer 'solutions' to those (most of the sample) who were looking for 'answers' to the problems of how to juggle different roles or to reach a consensus with their teams or managers.

Narratives

The aim of using a narrative was to increase detail and depth of understanding by directing attention towards the entire process of developing a PTWA, subjectively meaningful events in the process, and their own role in crafting the arrangement, as well as the impact of both the inner and outer context on the arrangement. Bryman (2008, p.553) suggests that narrative analysis, while variously defined, involves a sensitivity to four elements: 'the connections in people's accounts of past, present, and future events and states of affairs; people's sense of their place within those events and states of affairs; the stories they generate about them; and the significance of context for the unfolding of events and people's sense of their role within them'. The follow-up questions in my interview schedule (Appendix B) were designed to ensure that all these four elements were covered. The disadvantages of narrative history are first, that it depends on the interviewee's accurate recall of events, and secondly that the interviewee might be tempted to rethink events to reduce cognitive dissonance. However, in this research the narrative was not used to establish a single 'truth' about the past, but the individual's representation and sense-making of the past events.

The interviews started with the narrative because the process was the most important part of the research. However, perhaps because they had prepared a list in advance, in practice many participants started to talk about the critical

incidents – and indeed about the impact of working part-time on their personal and professional identity – before I asked the questions. I decided to follow their lead and let the conversation go in whatever direction they took it, while bringing us back to the narrative once the story of the incident or issue was complete. The two parts of the interview therefore merged into each other more than I had expected, and required me to redirect attention to the narrative at various points, but felt like a more natural and participatory option than trying to ‘save up’ the incidents for the end of the interview, which might have been uncomfortable for interviewees when they had something important to say.

Throughout the interview, based on both the literature and the exploratory research, I followed up on any references to the ‘sensitizing concepts’ identified in advance from the academic literature, my own personal experience, anecdotal and informal evidence, and the exploratory research: this was one of the points when I was particularly conscious that they also came from my own conceptual framework, based on personal experience (King, 2004). The topic guide included:

- The details of the ‘arrangement’:
 - schedule of availability (number of days; which days of the week; length of working day, how many hours they work, how many they’re contracted to work)
 - flexibility of work-home boundaries (degree of connectedness to work on days off)
 - volume of outputs / scope of responsibility – ie full-time-equivalent outputs or some %FTE; how that is measured and monitored
- How the details of the arrangement changed over time and why:
 - how they negotiated the details of the arrangement, and
 - who they negotiated with (ie team to delegate to or share with; level of formality with boss etc)

- over what time period the negotiation happened
- what made the development of the part-time arrangement easier or more difficult, including the 'nature' of the work: essential characteristics of work which make part-time easy or difficult
- Meanings of part-time: meanings of the events in their narrative; how part-timers made sense of them; meanings of part-time for personal and professional identity
- Degree to which they were open about their PTWA

Although some of the participants also talked about future plans, and nearly all mentioned career disadvantage at some point, this did not form a major part of the narrative, for reasons of time.

Critical incidents

The second part of the interview was a discussion of the most significant incidents from their critical incident record. The purpose of using the critical incident technique (Butterfield et al., 2005) is to help participants to surface meanings, beliefs and feelings around part-time working, particularly the hard-to-articulate issues around context and identity. The critical incident records formed some source materials which participants could draw on in the interviews. I felt it was particularly important to 'ground' the participants' interviews in this way because several interviewees at the exploratory stage mentioned that they were finding the issues hard to express. For example, they made statements about the contextual barriers to part-time working, but when asked for examples, could not think of any: they just 'had a feeling' that part-time was disapproved of. There was a similar difficulty in explaining precisely how part-time had impacted on their professional and personal lives, and some were daunted by trying to unpick problematic job characteristics from within the monolithic 'nature' of the work. The aim of the critical incident record was to

help to ground these issues in a specific context, and help participants to articulate them.

However, about half of the participants interpreted 'situations or events' to mean 'problems or issues' and those that came prepared generally brought a list headed 'problems and benefits', or 'advantages and disadvantages', rather than identity issues. There are several possible reasons for this. First, they may have been reflecting the common perception that part-time is a 'problem' which needs to be 'accommodated', rather than a normal way to work, or a normal part of life – and they then 'compensated' for the negatives with a list of benefits to themselves or their organization. Such a perception might indeed have been encouraged by my presence as a researcher investigating part-time work. Secondly, it is possible that participants felt more comfortable with issues than with incidents, particularly those speaking a non-native language, although the depth and intimacy of the rest of the conversation belies this explanation, since many interviewees stated that they found the conversations both cathartic and enlightening.

Analysis of the data from InfoCo revealed that the language of 'moments when part-time becomes relevant' was not clear to all participants. Since the aim of the critical incident stage of the interview was partly to access the identity discourses, I changed the questions for the PSF interviews (which had not benefitted from the set-up conversation), and found that these questions elicited more relevant answers about professional identity.

- Has working part-time affected your sense of yourself as a person? If so, how? If they only spoke of either professional, or personal, identity, I asked about the other; I also followed up with questions about how they negotiated their different roles (which most of the participants had already referred to during their narrative, particularly when they had experienced conflicts between roles (usually work and motherhood).
- What are the moments when you think or talk about being part-time?
- Do you think of yourself as a part-time [senior manager]?

3.4.4 Data analysis

Transcription

Transcription was done partly by the researcher, although a transcription service was used for approximately half of the transcripts. Transcripts were then checked by the researcher and sent to participants, and they were invited to reflect (Willig, 1999, p.47) and return any insights or comments to the researcher. Only seven of the participants did so, and only two in any detail: in both cases, the comments focused on dilemmas which were specific to their personal situation, so these served to deepen my understanding of their 'choices'. Most of the participants saved their comments for the group discussions which had already been promised.

Abductive analysis

Abductive analysis (van de Ven, 2007) starts with the observation of an anomaly or unexpected phenomenon – in this case, the mismatch between the preferred and actual working hours of managers and professionals, and the observation (Sheridan, 2004) that job design, far from adapting to the influx of women with caring responsibilities into the professional and managerial workforce, has remained stuck in the ideal-worker mode (Acker, 1990). The exploratory research had suggested that a process approach to the development of a part-time professional job might generate potential explanations.

Data analysis started with immersion – getting to know each participant (tabulated information about participants is in Appendix C) and the emergence and development of their PTWA (Appendix E). Coding began on paper, using marginal notes to summarize the points made by the participants using their own language. Sensitizing concepts, which 'provide a general sense of reference and guidance in approaching empirical instances' but are open to change (Blumer, 1954, in Bryman, 2008, p.373) came from the exploratory research, the literature and my own experience of working in this area. This

initial process created a provisional template for the process, as well as nodes for national context, organizational context, and two 'stray' nodes for perceptions of 'suitable' work for a part-timer (pace, unpredictability, schedule control, interdependence, customer-facing, team-managing) and analysis of critical incidents

Abductive analysis recognizes the impossibility of researchers starting with a blank slate; rather, the researcher's observations are 'viewed through a conceptual pattern' (Van de Ven, 2007, p104). The initial process template created a preliminary set of eight categories which described the elements and/or stages of each participant's journey to a part-time job: at this point, the chronology was rough and uncertain, and some categories were more 'factors' than 'events':

1. Re-evaluation of place of work in life
2. Finding a suitable job: some jobs are regarded as unsuitable for part-timers
3. Finding a suitable manager: some part-timers had to 'shop around' for a manager who would take them on part-time.
4. Making the request
5. Redesigning the job (1): what were they responsible for and how did this differ from when they worked full-time?
6. Redesigning the job (2): Negotiating the availability pattern
7. Continuous, ongoing change – job crafting
8. Getting promoted as a part-timer

Although this process table represented only a rough preliminary understanding of the process and was later developed, it provided a helpful initial template for the process. Together with the notes and impressions I had written about each participant immediately after each interview, and multiple readings of each transcript, the tables enabled me to get to know the participants and their inner

contexts, and to make a first stab at a process. Once this template (King, 2004) was achieved, I could then go back into the data and re-divide it more consistently into more detailed sub-codes. The final coding structure is set out in Appendix D.

In keeping with an abductive research strategy, I used the participants' language as a starting point, as shown above, but as the analysis developed, I began to use more language from the literature (crafting, identity, discourses, etc) based on social scientific knowledge (Blaikie, 2007, p96).

Coding the critical incidents

Analysis of the critical incident data merits a separate note. I had intended that the critical incident questions would form a separate part of the interview, intended to surface identity issues, and therefore would be analysed separately; however, in the event, interviewees not only had no difficulty in talking about identity issues, but mostly brought them up during the narrative history part of the interview. The two types of data, which I had expected (perhaps naively) would be treated separately, in fact had merged together in the interviews, meaning that the formal list of incidents which some participants had brought to the interviews had normally been covered by the time we reached the end of the narrative. Participants had generally not interpreted the instructions to mean identity incidents in the 3-4 weeks leading up to the interview, but had brought a list of incidents some of which related to many years ago, which they incorporated into their narrative story. Although this was a failure of interview design on my part, the critical incident list worked to focus participants' minds so that they didn't come 'blind' to the interview. Some participants found it hard to identify incidents, and understood the question as issues (problems) or pros and cons, which again they brought up throughout their narrative story.

I therefore decided that the critical incident data should be incorporated into the narrative data, as that was how participants presented it to me.

Building a theoretical narrative

The underlying generative mechanisms are necessary to build theory from data on patterns; the identification of these mechanisms requires consideration of the institutional, historical and material factors which may have shaped the discourses: 'we need to ask what the world must be like for those ideas and activities to be possible' (Willig, 1999, p.48). Abductive analysis involves identification of an 'anomaly or breakdown that is inconsistent with our understanding or theory of the world' (van de Ven, 2007, p.64) – in this case, that managers and professionals appear to be unable to attain their preference for working less, despite the taken-for-granted norm that individuals 'choose' their working hours. Abduction 'entails creative insight that resolves the anomaly if it were true. A conjecture developed through abductive inference represents a new plausible alternative to the status quo explanation of a given phenomenon' (van de Ven, 2007, p.64). In order to identify the generative mechanisms which allow the development of a PTWA, a logic of discovery or creativity (van de Ven, 2007) was applied to the process data, asking what had allowed these individuals to achieve a PTWA, and what would need to change in order for other people's declared working-hours preferences to be achieved.

As a result of this process of problematizing the taken-for-granted assumptions of full-time work norms, I identified three discourses [generative mechanisms] which support the status quo and thereby limit the emergence of part-time jobs.

3.4.5 Establishing trustworthiness and authenticity

When the aim of research is not to establish a single 'true' account of social reality, Guba and Lincoln (1994, in Bryman, 2008), suggest that trustworthiness and authenticity are the most appropriate evaluation criteria.

Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness is established in four ways: referring conclusions back to participants (credibility); providing thick descriptions which *others* can refer to in order to make judgements about their possible relevance to other situations (transferability); record keeping and auditing by peers (dependability); and showing auditors that the researcher has not allowed personal values to sway the conduct of the research (confirmability).

Credibility

Credibility is established by referring conclusions back to participants (Bryman, 2008). Furthermore, Willig (1999) suggests that discussion between groups whose experiences differ can help individuals to formulate alternatives to the choices they have made. This enables participants to identify 'action spaces', as well as alternative readings of the events, and awareness of the underlying structures which accommodate these action spaces.

A transcript of their interview was sent to each participant, inviting them to reflect and respond, but only seven responded, and only two of those in any depth. This may have been because I had already told participants that the principal opportunity for feedback would be a videoconference at which I would present a summary of findings within their organization.

I presented feedback to the sponsoring director at InfoCo (Director of Inclusion, Diversity and Sustainability, EMEA) and then did a separate videoconference to feed back to participants in March 2013. All 18 participants were invited: eight Dutch and four UK participants attended, many by videoconference from the Netherlands and other parts of the UK. I presented the preliminary eight-stage model of the transition from full-time to part-time as a process over time: participants agreed that this not only 'made sense' but also offered a greater window of opportunity ('action space') for losing the 20% of their workload than did the traditional model of transition to part-time as 'personal trigger / organizational response'.

Discussion confirmed the credibility of the findings, and focused on: the opportunity to 'lose' a part of their job presented by the annual restructure which took place at InfoCo; the lack of support from managers and the organization, and particularly a need for individual managers to change their mindset, to be trained in how to manage a part-timer, and to understand how to reorganize team workload over time; and the different challenges faced by part-time managers and individual contributors. The other point of common interest (and much hilarity) was that all the participants admitted to 'hiding' their part-time status to some degree: this was a 'lightbulb moment' for participants who realized that by keeping 100% responsibility, being super-efficient, and making themselves available during their time off, they might be discouraging less skilled and experienced workers from the transition to part-time. All of the participants said that they found the discussion enlightening.

At PSF, the feedback conversation was held by teleconference in October 2013, and was organized by the sponsoring director, the Director of Diversity and Inclusive Leadership, EMEIA, to include not just participants but also other interested parties from the PSF diversity and inclusion community around the world. The Director organized this session as a feedback and organizational learning session, so there was less opportunity for research participants to interact with the findings: only five of the research participants were able to attend, and there were 15 other interested parties, which meant that the discussion was much less interactive. Again I presented findings: at the request of the sponsoring director, I focused on the limitations on the choices available to part-timers, and the possibilities for change which might help more women to reach higher levels in the organization.

Discussion of the findings centred on what PSF could do to provide more support for part-timers. In particular, teleconference participants were interested in: career progression for part-timers, and the difficulties of women reaching partnership; how cultural differences in the context between the UK and the Netherlands supported or hindered the progression to part-time work; and specific actions which PSF could take to provide more support to part-timers.

They embraced the notions of alternative working practices, redistributing workload over time, organizational support for fixed-volume elements of the job, and avoiding competitive timescales for promotion. The director described the findings as ‘rich and with lots of learning for us’.

Dependability

As someone with a background in this area, and pre-existing knowledge of many of the issues, there is a particular danger of bias (Bryman, 2008). I recognize my own biases as set out in the research philosophy section, and I keep a reflexive journal of my thoughts and feelings in relation to difficult issues or choices in the research: this has informed both the analysis and the writing up of this thesis.

For practical reasons, peer auditing of the entire data set was not possible, but I asked a fellow doctoral researcher to analyse my coding of four transcripts, one from each research site, to check the consistency and reliability of the coding, and look for evidence of bias in the questioning or coding. She was able to confirm the general outline of my analysis, and also to confirm that there was no *overt* evidence of bias (Bryman, 2008), but made helpful comments about the coding of individual elements of the text, particularly the discourses.

Transferability

Transferability involves the provision of thick descriptions and I have followed Langley’s (2009) suggestion that this can be achieved by: the inclusion of original texts to illustrate concepts and stories to convince the reader that the researcher had close access; the tabular display of *multiple* (ie not duplicated in the text) confirmatory quotes for each theoretical point (shown in Appendix E and F); and a similar tabular display for the data coding procedure, based on my journal and copies of each stage of my analysis.

Confirmability

I don't believe it's possible to eliminate personal values from research, so I have tried to be explicit about my own values through a self-reflexive process and through openness throughout the research and this document.

Van de Ven points out (2007, p.291) that 'reflexivity emphasizes the need to be sensitive to the viewpoints of others and whose interests are being served in a study' but also that there is a need for 'an external 'reality check' on this internal reflection... you won't know your own assumptions and your own viewpoint until you also engage with others. An external orientation of engagement is also required to be reflexive.' My principal reality check came from my engagement with research participants and with HR and Diversity professionals in both the organizations involved in this research, and in each country, in order to sense-check my understanding of the research findings. Engagement with PhD colleagues, my panel and supervisor, was another important source of reflexivity. I have also presented the findings at three doctoral colloquia, two research group meetings at Cranfield, and five external academic conferences, which has enabled me to gain feedback and further reflect on findings.

Authenticity

Authenticity is defined as whether research is: fair to different participants; helpful to participants in understanding their social situation; helpful to participants in understanding each other; an impetus to change for participants; and empowering for participants to take the necessary action (Guba and Lincoln, 1994, in Bryman, 2008). Fairness, helpfulness and empowerment for participants to take the necessary action has been assured by group discussions, in which I fed back and discussed my analysis with participants and sponsoring directors. Feedback in these discussions was extremely positive from both participants and the sponsoring directors and there was no indication of bias towards one side or the other.

In terms of the research providing an impetus for change, InfoCo participants decided during the group discussion to set up an online support forum for part-timers, using the findings as the basis for mutual support as well as further action. Since the sponsoring director subsequently left the company, I had a follow-up conversation in June 2013 with the replacement Diversity and Inclusion EMEA manager, and she also wanted to have further conversations about how to put the findings into practice. At PSF, the group discussion of feedback involved the sponsoring director: by the end of the conversation, she had decided that the research would be used as the basis for a further support programme for part-timers, and she also asked for further presentations to other parts of the organization.

3.5 Chapter summary

In this chapter I have described my ontological and epistemological position, and the consequent research strategies I have adopted. I also described how the exploratory research helped me to identify that a process approach would be appropriate, and to define the 'arrangement' as my unit of analysis. The exploratory research also confirmed both identity and the 'nature' of the work as important themes, and therefore underpinned the theoretical background to the main research.

This chapter has also related the research strategy to the methodological choices and described the sampling strategy, data collection and data analysis methods. Finally I explained my efforts to ensure both trustworthiness and authenticity in this study.

4 FINDINGS: THE PROCESS OF TRANSITION TO PART-TIME

4.1 Chapter introduction

Chapters 4 and 5 present the key findings of this research: chapter 4 concentrates on the process of developing a part-time working arrangement, and chapter 5 on dominant discourses and counter-arguments which frame the meanings of part-time in the contexts studied.

The process of emergence and development of a PTWA happened in four stages (see figure 1): the individual's personal evaluation of the possibility of part-time work in a particular job; the individual preparing the case for part-time; the negotiation of the PTWA with the line manager; and the adaptation of the arrangement by the individual in the months and years after the agreement. Each stage isolates elements of the process, in order to clarify and simplify, although in reality this is a less coherent process: some part-timers do more of one stage than another, and in some cases the stages merge into each other. Appendix E shows the stages of the process for each of the 39 participants in this research.

The transition to part-time involves both a job and a person. A PTWA aimed at attracting or retaining a manager or professional is designed around a particular person (a part-timer) but since my unit of analysis is the arrangement, rather than the person, and since the arrangement is renegotiated at the start of each new job, the process begins when the individual starts to consider a *new* part-time job. Those professional part-timers who have done multiple consecutive part-time jobs have to assess each new job in order to design a PTWA that works not just for themselves, but also for their clients, manager, team and organization. It is therefore important to distinguish the person's evaluation of the place of work in their life (their original decision to transition to part-time) from their assessment of the feasibility of doing any particular job on a part-time basis: the two may not be contemporaneous.

As an individual's career develops, the four stages form a continuous loop, such that experience of developing one PTWA becomes part of the context for the individual to develop their next one.

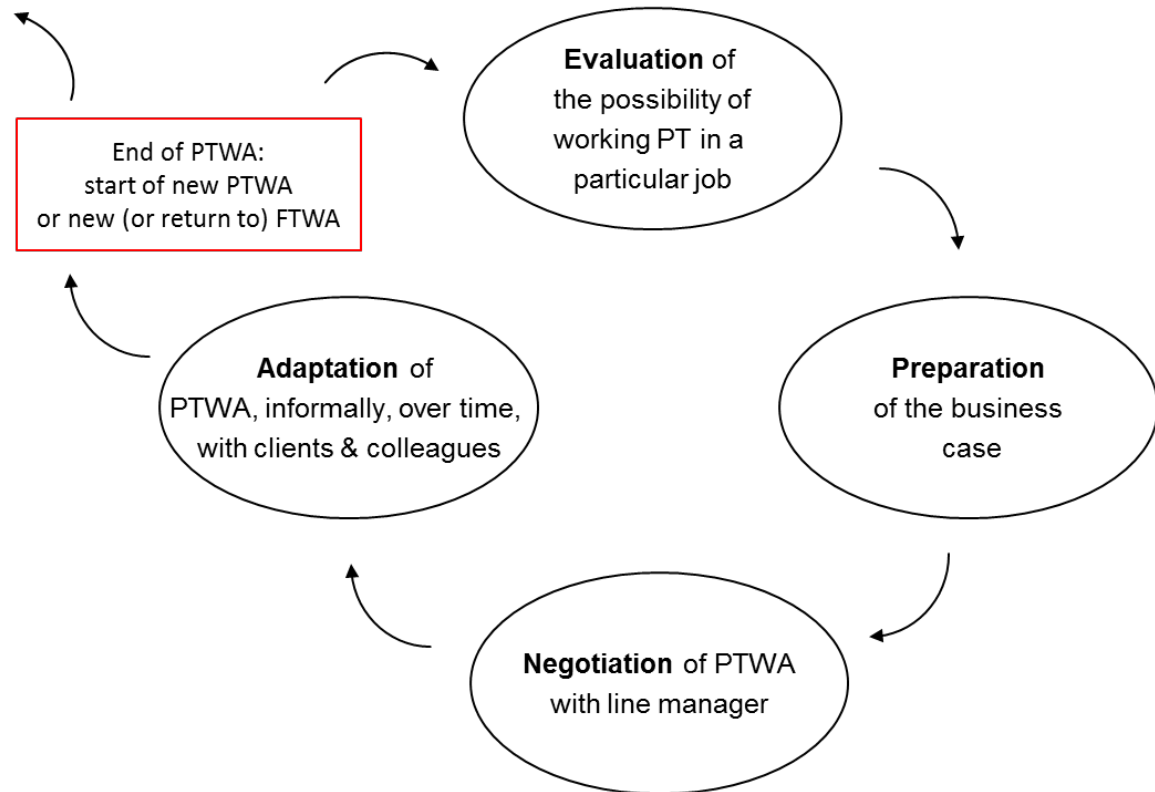


Figure 1 Four stages of development of a PTWA

The part-timer's non-work circumstances, values, life roles, and any previous history of working part-time, form part of the inner context within which the new process starts – a context which also includes a national culture, sector, organization and team. In this study, 16 participants were experienced part-timers, having held previous part-time job(s) in a different organization or department, before they transitioned to their current role; many were well-established in their other life roles. The other 23 were in their first part-time job, so their personal transition to part-time, probably involving a new life role, was contemporaneous with the start of the process of developing this particular PTWA.

Throughout this chapter, I will refer forward to three sets of discourses which will be presented in detail in chapter 5. Since these discourses are closely

related to the development of the stages of the process, I note them here in brief. First, the dominant 'nature of the work' discourse presented some types of work as unsuitable for execution on a part-time basis, while counter-arguments suggested that this understanding was culturally constructed, and that different working practices could make all types of work suitable for part-timers. The second dominant discourse represented part-time work as a 'lifestyle choice', a *personal* choice to step away from the 'natural' or neutral working practices of full-timers, such that the responsibility for implementing a PTWA lay with the individual: the counter-argument redefined part-time as an *organizational* resourcing issue and therefore (partly) an organizational and team responsibility. And thirdly, part-timers themselves were categorized as either a stigmatized and less professional 'other' or as the 'new normal'.

4.2 Evaluating options other than transition to part-time

4.2.1 Section introduction

This section describes the first stage of the four-stage process of the development of a PTWA: an individual's initial assessment of the possibility of doing their own job, or a job they would like to do, on a part-time basis. The start of the stage therefore requires the identification of a particular job, so there may have been multiple evaluations and rejections of part-time in previous situations.

The stage may end in moving immediately on to stage two, preparing the case for part-time, but this section outlines three other options: postponing the transition to part-time until circumstances are more appropriate; remaining full-time; and departing from the organization in search of a different employer, self-employment, or a non-work role. Since this study only included part-timers currently in employment, none had actually carried out this intention to depart, but, despite working for one of two organizations which in theory embraced and supported flexible working, six of the 39 had come to the conclusion that

departure from InfoCo or PSF would be a better option, and only stayed on as part-timers because of chance circumstances; a quarter had postponed their transition to their current part-time job at PSF or InfoCo (others had postponed in previous jobs or organizations).

4.2.2 Postpone the transition to part-time

Some participants described their initial consideration of a transition to part-time being followed by a substantial period of waiting for the right context to request part-time: a few waited for more positive legal or organizational policies, but most waited for a more accepting organizational culture. While perhaps the typical pattern is to transition to part-time immediately after return from maternity leave, some of the mothers in this sample had returned to their full-time job because they didn't see part-time as a feasible option at that point; instead, they waited for more supportive legislation or policy, or a more accepting organizational culture or manager.

Perhaps the most striking example of postponing part-time was Tjarko, an internal business consultant at InfoCo, who illustrates the development of part-time as the 'new normal' in the Netherlands over the past 20 years. Tjarko wanted to work part-time 30 years ago when he had young children, but found the culture in the IT industry an impediment: 'It was a kind of no-go area for men... it wouldn't help career either. [] Thirty years ago this sounded to be the, well, fact of life. The IT industry didn't work part-time.' The Dutch Working Time Adjustment Act gave him an entitlement to part-time in 2000, but still no support from his organization or his manager: 'he [the manager] didn't really encourage it. He was more holding back, Well if you insist, you could consider it, but... Very indirect, but not much in favour of it'. In 2010, InfoCo 'HR restated their official position when it comes to flexible work and part-time work, etc and that was a very good opening for the discussion again with my manager' – but it was only after InfoCo also changed their headcount policy that the manager (reluctantly) agreed to a part-time arrangement in 2011.

Postpone until there's a legal entitlement

Some participants remained full-time until they had a legal entitlement to part-time work; this was most obvious in cases of mothers who returned from maternity leave full-time because they did not have the entitlement to part-time. Catrien was refused part-time work when she joined InfoCo, so she agreed to work full-time for a year before requesting part-time parental leave, both to prove herself as a good performer and to qualify for the legal entitlement which Dutch employees have after a year's service.

After one year, I mean, you are entitled, legally, to work taking parental leave, so they can't refuse that once you are in the company. Catrien, Account manager, InfoCo Netherlands

Anneke had her first child while working in Belgium, but only requested part-time parental leave a year later in 2007, on her return to Netherlands, where the legislation was much more supportive of part-time.

When my oldest was born... that's when I was working in Belgium and I didn't really know how things were arranged so I was actually working five days. And then when I moved back to the Netherlands I thought, Ah, you know, I'm back here now so I can maybe ask for parental leave and then I started to take parental leave for the Friday. Anneke, Marketing manager, InfoCo Netherlands

Postpone until there's a policy entitlement

An encouraging policy on part-time work was a basic requirement for many part-timers. At InfoCo, this encouragement was felt to be lacking, as no specific guidance was provided about part-time, although the company had an encouraging policy towards flexible working in general. Jeroen was more vocal than most in his articulation of the company's failings in this respect.

InfoCo don't have an active policy or process behind this, that's what you need if you want to feel comfortable to go into those type of discussions

but this doesn't exist, there is no policy or process at work, governance model or guidance from HR. The guidance is 'in agreement with your manager'. Jeroen, Project manager, InfoCo Netherlands

In the absence of specific support at InfoCo, employees with less than a year's service at InfoCo Netherlands had to get lucky. Roos achieved her permanent part-time job (after a one-year temporary part-time contract) quite by chance, because InfoCo acquired a company with different terms and conditions in 2005. She described herself as lucky, and illustrates the somewhat random nature of the availability of part-time for those who didn't qualify for the legal entitlement.

The HR overall responsible person in, based in the UK at that point in time, he just said, No, we're not going to hire her. [] There was no way of persuading. [] My luck was, InfoCo had acquired a company [] and they were on a different HR package. [] They would hire me because they did not have an issue with the four days a week. So I remained employed by InfoCo. Roos, HR executive, InfoCo Netherlands

At PSF, in contrast, the policy was much more actively encouraging, with internal communications promoting flexible working as a talent retention tool, and a focus specifically on part-time as a desirable form of flexibility. Although much of the focus was on retaining mothers, there were also specific schemes to encourage part-time work for groups of employees apart from mothers: for example, a part-time scheme for older employees triggered a latent desire for part-time work in several participants who had previously not considered part-time possible in their jobs. Paulus says that part-time had simply never occurred to him until he found a company scheme, demonstrating the unthinking strength of the full-time norm for many employees.

To be honest, I didn't even know that it [the part-time policy] was there but [] I was looking for someone else in some kind of community home space [intranet] for people, and said, Hey, there's something special, something specific for people over 55. And then it went quite quickly, []

it just popped up and I said, Well, why not? Paulus, Director, Assurance, PSF, Netherlands

Postpone because of organizational culture – and lack of believable role models

The specific initiatives to encourage part-time at PSF had only happened in the previous two years: those who had evaluated the possibility of part-time before that did so in a very different culture. Cassandra returned to her job full-time after maternity leave in 2000, because part-time was unheard of, and as a relatively new and junior partner, part-time just didn't fit with what was expected of the role.

At the time there were no partners working anything less than five days. [] I was quite a new partner and the ... it just didn't seem to be ... I would have liked to [work part-time], but it, it just seemed impossible; nobody had done it before... and it was very much frowned upon and it was certainly not spoken about. [] There were no role models. Cassandra, Partner, Tax, PSF UK

Jeroen was still waiting for the InfoCo culture to catch up with the organizational rhetoric, and with the culture of Dutch corporates: while InfoCo had embraced location flexibility and temporal flexibility, part-time was a different matter, and here, the flexibility rhetoric didn't match reality.

It [part-time]'s very possible, as long as there's structure in the company. I think that's... the willingness to explore these types of things is not here [at InfoCo] at the moment. So I think I'm going to have to skip this, it's going to have to be another generation to fight that battle. Jeroen, Project manager, InfoCo Netherlands

Furthermore, part-timers who made it to the top of the hierarchy within a long-hours culture were regarded as exceptional performers – and might even be off-putting, because of the huge personal sacrifices necessary to work the current

system. Ordinary mortals might conclude that part-time was, after all, impossible at senior levels for them.

You don't see as many role models with people who've managed to get there [to partner status] and work flexibly at the same time. [] I think you look at them and think, You are very, very exceptional in terms of how you manage that... and how on earth *did* you manage that? How badly do I want to push to progress on like that? I don't, necessarily. Fiona, Senior manager, Assurance, PSF UK

Postpone while waiting to find a good manager

Regardless of the legislative and organizational context, part-timers also had to find a sympathetic manager, and in the absence of active organizational initiatives to characterize part-time as both feasible and desirable, some managers retained a stereotypical view of part-time as unprofessional, career-limiting, implying less commitment, and difficult for colleagues and managers to accommodate. Anneke and Wanda both came back from maternity leave full-time, and postponed the transition to part-time until they found a more supportive manager. Anneke was reluctant to ask her UK manager for part-time work, but felt more confident when she had a Swedish manager, who she thought was more comfortable with part-time working.

He [the manager] was totally fine with it, they didn't give me a hard time at all. [] In Sweden it's also a bit more common, so I think that was maybe the... made the conversation also a bit easier to have it with a Swedish manager than to have it with a UK manager. Anneke, Marketing manager, InfoCo Netherlands

Wanda postponed her request for part-time because she knew her boss would disapprove: she attributed this to his management style, which was both military and masculine.

I had a particular manager [during maternity leave] who I would have struggled to have that conversation with. [] He's an ex-army person,

team of, very tight team, very well run team, of men, and the team I was leading for him were a team of how he termed 'the boys'. [] I was afraid of having the conversation with him, and that's probably what held me back. Wanda, Technical director, InfoCo UK

Postpone while doing the professional identity work

In an environment dominated by ideal workers and long hours, there was a reluctance to transition to part-time because of the common perception that working part-time implied less commitment, ambition, or career potential (see chapter 5). Even before making the case for part-time, prospective part-timers had to resolve the identity tensions between being part-time and being professional.

Concern about career progress as a part-timer was almost universal. It was perceived to be very difficult for part-timers to compete with full-timers for promotion (see discourse 2, section 5.3), so Wanda returned from maternity leave to a full-time job because she wanted to demonstrate commitment to her job, and potential for promotion and career development.

So that decision [to return full-time after maternity leave], it was about wanting to be fully engaged and [] making a whole contribution and being able to continue to progress and learn in my career. So [] I felt that I needed to be full-time to be really *in* the job. It was more about a statement that you might think I'm not wholly committed to this role. Wanda, Technical director, InfoCo UK

It took Carrie a year to raise the issue of working part-time because she knew it would be difficult to 'accommodate' in her fast-moving, unpredictable environment (see discourse 1, section 5.2), so she felt that she would be labelled a 'troublemaker' and marked down against her peers in the annual evaluations.

About a year [] before I actually went part-time, I felt that I wasn't getting to do the things that I wanted to do because there weren't enough hours in the day. You're trained to a degree not to say anything overly negative and that's natural in terms of not wanting to be the troublemaker [] because we're all marked against each other, so there's marks on a curve... Carrie, Assistant director, Transaction tax, PSF UK

Part-timers also took time to resolve the change, and therefore perceived inconsistency, in their own preferences: they had chosen the profession knowing that long hours were a normal and, it was believed, an essential element of the work (see discourse 1, section 5.2). By association, they were also assumed to have 'chosen' the long hours, so a sudden preference for working less made for an uncomfortable tension: how could the established professional values be combined with the new personal ones?

You know the hours are a bit much, I'm not really getting out when I'm supposed to, but equally that's your understanding of the status quo. [] This is the job you're doing, it comes with these hours, you've done them for the last four years. Carrie, Assistant director, Transaction tax, PSF UK

4.2.3 Depart (or nearly depart) for another job, or a non-work role

Although all the participants in this study had eventually achieved a PTWA, several mentioned that at the initial stage, when exploring the possibilities, they had thought that leaving would be the only option, and had only been 'rescued' for the organization because a perceptive manager had identified and articulated the problem and worked out a solution with them. The perceived problems were partly practical, but also involved the resolution of tensions between professional and personal identity.

Florence didn't initially request part-time work after maternity leave in 2004 because she was convinced the request would not be granted, so she had decided not to return to work. The culture was too 'masculine'.

To be honest with you, before I was pregnant I said I wouldn't want to come back to work at all. [] It's such a masculine culture, flexible working wasn't really seen as the norm. Florence, Business development manager, InfoCo UK

Carrie thought she would have to downgrade her job, and was considering switching to secretarial work in order to get the part-time hours which she believed to be impossible because of the nature of her work as an Assistant Director in the fast-moving TT (Transaction Tax) division.

I'd started thinking about leaving [] and downgrading from the transaction side. I seriously considered going into secretarial work, [] I thought I'd have to change jobs. I couldn't see a sensible way to get... because this is... you know, TT is TT as, as they always used to say. Carrie, Assistant director, Transaction tax, PSF UK

Wanda had worked out the practicalities of delegating and compressing her job role in order to work a four-day week but was unable to live with other people's perceptions of her as a part-timer. Taking voluntary redundancy and a year off work to be with her young son seemed a more legitimate option. She was prepared to leave the company because the impact of part-time on her professional identity was inconceivable.

I'd done my research, talked to a few people, thought, How great would that be, just to work four days? And I'd looked at the work I was doing on a Friday and I thought, I could easily delegate this and it's stuff that's not going to make a massive impact. But I didn't quite have the courage to go and ask somebody. [] I thought they would somehow think less of me and look me over for promotion or other opportunities. So it was only when we had a redundancy round come up, so voluntary redundancy, and I thought, Oooh fantastic. Wanda, Technical director, InfoCo UK

4.2.4 Remain full-time

Jeroen was the only participant in this study who still worked full-time. He wanted to work part-time but, despite the organizational policy and the legal entitlement to work part-time, he felt he would be required to deliver full-time objectives for part-time pay, and would still be expected to make himself available during his time off. He had therefore created an unofficial 'short full-time' arrangement: he continued to be paid full-time, but worked just his contracted 37.5 hours, rather than the extended hours which are the norm at InfoCo.

I can request it, and I think by law it's even allowed to go four days in Holland. It will *have* to get approved. I just don't feel there is enough structure in this job or in this company to request that, so... If I do that, I think it will just be less money, same amount of work and there's very little part-time work in InfoCo... I know a lot of people that are interested to do so, but there is no structure for it, and there is an expectation of being available. Jeroen, Project manager, InfoCo Netherlands

The theme of delivering full-time objectives for part-time pay was extremely common throughout this research (see discourse 2, section 5.3).

4.2.5 Summary of section

This section has described the first stage of the four-stage process of transition to part-time. Some individuals postponed the transition while waiting for a more propitious legal or policy environment, or a more supportive organizational culture or manager. Prospective part-timers also had to resolve the tensions between professional identity and a significant non-work role (discourse 3, section 5.4); after casting around for role models and finding none, some had considered departure for a non-work role or downgraded job (discourse 1, section 5.2). Although all but one of the participants in this study had achieved

part-time status, several spoke of having colleagues who had considered part-time but decided to remain full-time because of the expectation that a part-timer would deliver 100% outputs in 80% time. The numbers are too small to draw conclusions about differences between the four research sites, but the discourses were generally more positive in the Netherlands than in the UK, and in PSF rather than InfoCo. Many PSF part-timers had made the transition before the recent initiatives to encourage part-time. The barriers identified at this stage raise the interesting question of how many other potential part-timers never made it to stage two.

4.3 Preparing the individual business case for part-time

4.3.1 Section introduction

Those who had jumped the hurdles described in the previous section had work to do before making a formal request. The second stage of the process involved building the case for part-time, which might make reference to legal rights or, at PSF, an explicitly encouraging policy – a presumption in favour of part-time, based on a talent retention strategy. PSF had begun line manager training on managing a flexible worker, implying a degree of organizational responsibility for implementing a PTWA, but part-timers in these commercial organizations felt the need to clearly differentiate themselves from those part-timers who disregard the business's needs and rely on a 'right' to work PT. Whatever the organizational context, the case for part-time had to be individual and business-neutral.

I explained the position as I saw it and I didn't demand to go part-time, we discussed it and the conclusion was, Let's give it a go. So the concept of part-time was clear, that I thought that it was attractive, but I think you do need, in any environment, to see that you can make it work.
Alistair, Director, Tax, PSF UK

Part-time was still largely perceived as a personal lifestyle choice, so responsibility for making it work lay with the individual part-timer: prospective part-timers were concerned that their 'personal choice' to work part-time shouldn't inconvenience either the organization or their colleagues, so none made a *purely* rights-based case for working part-time (see discourse 2, section 5.3). Instead, they gathered best-practice information from other people, built their personal 'credit' as a talent worth retaining or hiring, and in a few cases, suggested or built alternative resources to compensate for their own reduced workload.

4.3.2 Gathering best-practice information

Prospective part-timers sometimes sought out best-practice advice from others before going to their line manager with a request. Most commonly, they spoke to actual part-timers about how to make a success of part-time work, how to approach their line manager and how to build a case for a PTWA. Developing a PTWA was not expected to be part of a line manager's toolkit at InfoCo: it was the individual's personal responsibility to make it work. Wanda even spoke about training up her line manager.

I did my research and found out as much as I could [] because line management don't always have the 'InfoCo View', so sometimes you'll find out what the 'InfoCo View' is and tell your line manager what it is.

Wanda, Technical director, InfoCo UK

Only a few people mentioned seeking advice from HR or Diversity departments, but those who did were seeking encouragement and an external sounding board, particularly if they were nervous about approaching their own manager. Keith spoke to the diversity director to gather experiences of other InfoCo part-timers.

That was very important as well, having a [diversity director], having someone out of the line, and someone who champions inclusion and

diversity for InfoCo. [] So that was a nice little external sounding post.
Keith, Internal consultant, InfoCo UK

4.3.3 Building up credit

The business case was personal and specific to each individual, referring to not just whether the particular job was suitable but whether the individual had enough personal 'credit' to warrant their retention or recruitment, and counteract the perceived expense and inconvenience of a transition to part-time. This credit might take the form of proving oneself a good performer, having rare or highly-rated skills or knowledge, or having a good reputation or relationship with the line manager.

For those who were transitioning from FT to PT in the same job this was often a performance conversation: high performers had the bargaining power; they found their managers more supportive.

And then because I proved myself, and I am a good sales person, I know all the score and stuff like that, and they didn't want to lose me, they said it [part-time]'s OK. I don't know what would have happened should I have not been such a good salesperson, you know, they probably would have said, No, we can't accept that. Catrien, Account manager, InfoCo Netherlands

For those who were switching job (going for promotion or a new job in a different department or organization) a different type of 'credit' was needed to overcome the barrier of applying for the job as a part-timer. This might be in the form of having rare skills, or stand-out expertise or reputation, which would encourage the hiring manager to consider part-timers.

They knew me in advance, I was writing articles and things on fiscal matters. I didn't realise that it also helped for the credibility in obtaining a job. Simone, Senior manager, Tax, PSF Netherlands

If the hiring manager was struggling to fill the post, they might be prepared to 'accommodate' a request for part-time work.

I know they were struggling to, to get good candidates' CVs put forward [] so, Let's get some resource rather than none, and if some good quality resource is sitting in front of me, then I'll be accommodating. Alan, IT project manager, InfoCo UK

Building a personal relationship with a potential hiring manager could also help those going for a promotion or new job. Roisin built several relationships over nine months before being offered the job when she joined PSF.

I knew people who worked here, who knew there was a need to have some support; [] they also knew it wasn't a full-time role. [] I came in and met the team, met lots of people, sat down and had lots of lunches and conversations with people, and over a very long period, for about nine months I think it was. [] There are so few jobs that are advertised as three or four day a week jobs []. You kind of have to know people to get them. Roisin, Business development director, PSF UK

4.3.4 Resourcing the transition to part-time

Part-time work was usually categorized as a personal lifestyle issue, not a resourcing issue, or an exchange of labour for pay (see discourse 2, section 5.3). Nonetheless, when a part-timer replaced a full-timer, the team faced a resourcing challenge. In this respect, part-time was different from other types of flexible working, such as full-time temporal or locational flexibility, because it created a resourcing gap. Part of the business case was planning to fill that gap.

Having, or developing, the skills to deliver FTE outputs in 80% time

The discourse of part-time as a personal lifestyle choice left the individual responsible for ensuring that they did not inconvenience the organization; most part-timers therefore expected no reduction in workload on transfer from full-time to part-time in the same job, or when replacing a full-time predecessor. They had to be confident that they could continue to deliver 100% of their job in 60-80% of the time before they could consider part-time. This intensification of work was possible when they had the appropriate contacts, skills and experience.

Because I was quite senior in what I do anyway, because I'd been doing it for so many years, I wasn't really stressed at working four days a week, I learnt how to work at four days a week, [] to manage five days' workload into four. Adele, Marketing manager, PSF UK [referring to previous job]

Coaching or training team members to take over elements of the job

A few of the team managers in this study who couldn't, or didn't want to, continue to deliver full-time-equivalent outputs after the transition to part-time, were able to delegate elements of their job, or arrange cover for their absences, as a means of building a more watertight business case. Wanda (in her previous job) provided an extreme example of this tactic, having carefully divided up 20% of her job among her team members before she approached her manager to negotiate part-time work.

I'd basically taken some elements of my whole job, [] and said, OK, there's some stuff here that would be good development opportunities for people in my team. Or other people in my team might enjoy doing it more than I ever did anyway. [] I just looked at everything and [] then I just chopped it up between twelve, because there was twelve of them and I went to them all individually and said, Look, you know, I've made the decision, would you be prepared to support me in it, and here's a little

piece that I'd like you to do, and they went, Absolutely, no problem, I'd be delighted to. Wanda, Technical director, InfoCo UK

Sometimes prospective part-timers trained or coached juniors to take over elements of their job, or to cover and deliver in their absence – which was a way of re-casting a transition to part-time as an opportunity to pass on skills and expertise, and provide development for their team members.

You give more responsibility to the people and they do a good job. Now they are dealing with it themselves very well, and I'm not getting disturbed sitting in the sun with a margarita, so there's a win/win situation. I put a lot of time in coaching and make sure that the people that are around me are doing the right things. Paulus, Director, Audit, PSF Netherlands

This reallocation of work depended on understanding 'a job' as a series of tasks which could be redistributed, rather than seeing 'a job' as a fixed, unquestioned, full-time entity, which was the more common perception (see discourse 2, section 5.3).

Making – and timing – the case for extra resources

Those participants who couldn't, or didn't want to, continue to deliver full-time-equivalent outputs after the transition to part-time, and were not team managers with juniors to whom they could delegate, had to find another way of delivering the 20-40% of 'a job' they were no longer going to do themselves. This might involve requesting extra resources – and some individuals made creative attempts to transition to part-time at a time that was appropriate for the team and the organization. This represents a very different approach from the norm that the transition to part-time is timed to suit an event in the employee's personal life, and often timed randomly, and inconveniently, for the organization.

The ideal situation for a full-timer wanting to transition to part-time in the same job was to be part of a successful, growing team which was taking on more resources, so that some of the part-timer's workload could be redistributed to a new team member. Patricia strategically timed her request for part-time, *and* for extra resources to fill the gap, to match the timing of InfoCo's annual budget: in effect, she negotiated the replacement of one person (herself) with 1.6 people (herself at 0.6, plus a new full-time person), which allowed the team to grow in a smaller step than taking on a whole extra person.

InfoCo have reorgs every year. [] If I was to come back [from maternity leave] at the end of our fiscal, [] end of July, the conversations would start happening in March, they could put forward a good case to go through. [] I don't know that anyone would necessarily tell you that, but I do think it's quite key; [] that's when people then move, the beginning of the next fiscal, as things change. Patricia, Marketing manager, InfoCo UK

Another natural inflection point was during an annual review, when discussion of the individual's needs and circumstances, and their future development plans, was an expected part of the conversation.

I started thinking about, well maybe I should work a bit less and not be in the office five days a week. [] I talked to one of the partners during a mid-year review. The partner said, Well, we've noticed also that you're really stressed. [] They said themselves that they were thinking about proposing to me that I should work a bit less and get some time back. Andre, Senior manager, Tax, PSF Netherlands

And finally, maternity leave presented an opportunity to plan ahead for resourcing on one's return, although Clara was the only participant in this study who spoke about making a decision to work part-time, and setting up the appropriate resourcing, *before* she went on maternity leave – possibly because other mothers were uncertain about their own preferences or needs after maternity leave.

I said that I was confident that I could make it [part-time] happen. [] And then if you share some information on *how*, people are much more willing to consider it, [] so you try to structure it as much as you can. [] We got everything arranged before I went on maternity leave, and then immediately from the day I returned I started working four days a week. Clara, Operations manager, InfoCo Netherlands

4.3.5 Constructing a professional PT identity: ‘coming out’ to manager

The final type of preparation for the negotiation stage involved personal identity work. Based on their assessment of the feasibility of transition to part-time, individuals had to piece together an identity narrative which fitted the options which now appeared to be available to them. The widespread view that working part-time was career-limiting made it harder for ambitious people to work part-time, and part-timers might be stigmatized as ‘other’ or in some sense unprofessional (see discourse 3, section 5.4). The act of having the conversation with the line manager about working part-time was the first stage of ‘coming out’ as a part-timer, experimenting with a new identity, so it required courage, particularly at InfoCo, where part-time working was much less established. Going public meant admitting the importance of non-work roles to other people, and managing the perception of a loss of professional commitment, reliability and career potential.

It takes a little bit of, courage maybe is the wrong word, but you need to try and think through, how might they respond, could that actually sow seeds that actually come back to bite me, if they think, Ah, Keith’s on the way out, or, Keith’s lost his motivation, or, We can’t rely on Keith so often. [] It bucks the trend, it breaks the mould, it’s standing up and saying, I want to do things differently. And I’m up there to be shot, admired, ignored [] because it’s just not a norm. Keith, Internal consultant, InfoCo UK

Those who were applying for a new job, whether externally or internally, also had to contend with the issue of *when* to mention part-time to the hiring manager. This was a live issue for Keith at the time of the research interview, because he was considering his next move as his two-year programme came to an end. While being honest about part-time upfront might mean not getting the job (his current line manager had been very unenthusiastic about part-time), waiting until after he'd been offered the job felt inauthentic, as if he were somehow ashamed about having a non-work role. Neither option seemed ideal.

How do I pitch it here? Do I actually keep quiet about it and let them want me and offer me the job, and then say, There's something else? Or do I blaze it from the rooftops and say, This is a prerequisite? In which case, some people might act like my line manager and say, Oh that doesn't work so we're not going to look at you. But then should I feel guilty that I'm hiding this [] because I feel passionately about the value of this? Keith, Internal consultant, InfoCo UK

Very few part-timers were sufficiently comfortable with their part-time professional identities (and with their value in the market) to ask for part-time work before being offered the job, but Veronica was a confident exception when she applied to work for PSF – perhaps encouraged by the organization's part-time initiatives, as well as the salience of her own motherhood identity.

I was just really honest, by this point we had two [children], and the job that I was applying for was about an hour away. So I just went in and said, I can't work full-time and if you want somebody that's full-time then it's not worth even talking to me basically. Veronica, Senior manager, Tax, PSF UK

4.3.6 Summary of section

This section has described the second stage of the four-stage process of transition to part-time, which is preparing the individual business case for transition to part-time in a particular job. This involved gathering best-practice

information, but also building up credit with the manager: this was an individual business case, not a universal one, and the barriers might be at local level, especially in terms of resourcing the 20-40% workload which the part-timer would be shedding. Although in many cases, the part-timer simply continued to deliver the same outputs after transition to part-time, part-time team managers were able to train juniors and delegate work, and a few were able to argue for alternative resources to fill the gap left by their reduction in workload. Some of this latter (small) group deliberately waited for a good moment in the organizational calendar, such as a budget, organizational restructure, or annual appraisal. However, for most, the discourse of part-time as an individual responsibility (discourse 2, section 5.3) prevented meaningful preparation of alternative resourcing for the 20-40% of the job they would not be doing.

The final element of preparation was personal identity work: assessing the likely change in perceptions of one's career and professional status, and presenting a resolution of the conflicts between work and non-work identities which would be acceptable in the local context. In a world of ideal workers, requesting a part-time job required a degree of forethought and courage, because it marked you out as someone with an important non-work role, with plenty of potential for stigma (discourse 3, section 5.4).

4.4 Negotiating the part-time working arrangement

4.4.1 Section introduction

The third of the four stages of developing a PTWA was negotiation: this concerned the formal request from the potential part-timer, and the response from the line manager. Since these part-timers were all making an individual business case for part-time, rather than a case based primarily on legal or organizational rights, HR involvement was minimal, and restricted to advising on policy; the more important negotiation was with the line manager.

The part-time employment contract involved the individual gaining time out from the 'normal' working week, whatever that was, and sometimes fewer responsibilities, in return for reduced pay. The reduction in pay required some change in the formal contract, and usually reference to HR policy on pro-rating pensions, benefits etc – unlike full-time temporal or locational flexibility which might be agreed informally between the individual and their manager, without any change in contract.

There were four elements which made up the building blocks of the PTWA. First was the suitability of the job role for execution on a part-time basis; secondly, the 'normal' schedule of availability (the days or times available to the organization, and the time protected for the individual); sometimes the workload and responsibilities of the job were discussed, although negotiation of this element was mostly remarkable for its absence; and finally (and occasionally) there might be a discussion of the career implications of the transition to part-time. The percentage reduction in pay was linked not to the responsibilities of the job (the normal measure of pay for a full-timer doing managerial and professional work) but to the schedule of availability.

Sometimes the initial negotiation resulted in a workable part-time job, particularly if the timing was good, and the nature of the work was 'suitable', but crafting the job often continued after the formal negotiation was over. This post-negotiation crafting is considered in the fourth and final stage of the process, adaptation (section 4.5).

4.4.2 Negotiation of whether the job role is suitable

Possibly the most contested negotiation related to those who did work which was regarded as 'unsuitable' for part-timers. Without a reassessment of both team workload and team working practices by the part-timer's manager and team colleagues, those doing fast-paced, interdependent and unpredictable work (see discourse 1, section 5.2) might be removed from their full-time professional role, and reassigned to a completely or partially redesigned job,

usually involving back-office, project-based, support or advisory tasks. The creation of a tailor-made part-time job implied both a positive for the part-timer (that the organization wanted to keep them) but also a negative, in that the tailor-made part-time job was usually restricted to less high-profile and less demanding activities, with implications for professional status and future career.

In this sample, representing two organizations at the forefront of flexible working practice in the UK, consideration of the suitability of the job for part-time usually resulted in prospective part-timers remaining in the same jobs, even when the part-timers themselves had doubts beforehand.

The clients I served, it was more than a full-time job, so I was a bit afraid that I couldn't fulfil the function I had before. [] They had to discuss it with the management team if I could stay in the same position and serving the same clients. Marloes, Managing consultant, Tax, PSF Netherlands

Only five participants in this research were completely removed, and two part-removed, from their previous job roles at negotiation stage, although three more found their work restricted in practice, as shown in section 4.5.2, meaning that in total, a quarter of the sample (10 out of 39) were to some degree restricted in the type of work they could do as a part-timer. However, the different policy environments at the two organizations affected what types of work would result in restriction or removal. PSF's policy directive was that the individual and their manager should decide whether, and how, their job might work on a part-time basis, while the InfoCo diversity team advised that some jobs, particularly those involving managing a team, were unlikely to be suitable for part-timers.

Negotiation of restricted type of work after removal from 'unsuitable' work

Three participants at InfoCo left team management jobs as a result of reducing their hours, to become individual contributors. All three wanted shorter, more controllable hours, and all three perceived changing job as the only possible

way to achieve this: being a team manager was assumed to require extended full-time hours and constant availability.

I'd been manager for a bunch of years, and at other companies, but in the end I decided to become an individual contributor, an expert in one, in one specific area. And that makes it easier to some extent on making choices. [] I mean and this is all perception right, [] the idea I have is that when you are a manager responsible for a number of persons that you often need to be available for those persons. Tjarko, Internal consultant, InfoCo Netherlands

At PSF in contrast, departures from unsuitable work took place in the division dealing with mergers and acquisitions, a classically 'unsuitable' department with demanding clients, long hours, unpredictable deal-making, high stakes and an extremely fast pace of work (discourse 1, section 5.2). Two part-timers worked in Mergers & Acquisitions (M&A) and, as PSF policy allowed, they initially kept their full-time jobs on a part-time basis, but no adjustments were made to their workload, or to team working practices, so they both concluded within a year that their jobs were impossible to do part-time. Negotiation of their current part-time roles therefore took place when PSF created new part-time jobs tailored to fit their specific needs as a part-timer: one moved into a back-office support role, and the other into an internal process improvement project.

A role that was coming up, they wanted somebody three days a week. [] My husband's attitude was, they didn't want to lose me, and they almost made this role up. [] So this became more of a back office... it was leaving M&A, but it became more of a technical, assisting role. [] It just wasn't sustainable [] to do client facing on four days when you're running the transaction. Christine, Assistant director, Corporate finance, PSF UK

Negotiation of part-restricted type of work after part-removal from 'unsuitable' work

Some participants were able to keep part of their job on going part-time, while giving up part of the job to other people. New part-time roles were negotiated on the basis that part of their previous job was impossible to do part-time. Patricia split the client list with the person who had been her maternity cover, so she only kept the smaller (and less important) clients, and did less management. Elinor stayed in the same team, but gave up the more fast-paced projects in favour of internally facing process-improvement projects.

My role has changed slightly so it's less, things that come in that are urgent and which we need to deal with, it's more a small-project based role now, which is more suited to not working full-time. [] There's less fire drills in terms of, an unexpected issue comes up and you just have to deal with it. Elinor, Tax manager, InfoCo UK

Implications of work restriction for identity

If the individual had tried, and failed, to make the PTWA work in 'difficult' circumstances, ie where the work was fast, unpredictable and interdependent, or where colleagues were unsupportive, the experience might have been traumatic.

I felt that I basically screwed up my career now by having a child and working part-time. [] You are an orphan. You feel very bad at that moment in time. I felt very bad at that moment in time. [] I was a bit battered I would say, there [by] just corporate environment. [] It was a bit of an internal feeling of worthlessness and then you work through that until you deal with it. Margreeth, Operations manager, PSF Netherlands

Coming out of this situation into a restricted, back-office job felt like a positive resolution of personal identity tensions, even if it meant downgrading from professional work to back-office or support work and a consequent adjustment to professional identity and career expectations.

So when there was an opportunity to go part time, and still stayed with this company, I was just grateful, and I didn't really have a long-term vision... I didn't have the energy to really think about it much. [] Content-wise it is also, yeah, interesting, so... [] What I think worked really well is that there is a lot less stress; both with my family and at work. Nienke, Tax lawyer, InfoCo Netherlands

The numbers in this study were too small to draw conclusions about the relationship between downgrading (as opposed to other types of transition to part-time) and personal and professional identity (and the impact on subsequent 'choices'). However, it was striking that the three most difficult and traumatic identity transitions in this research were all mid-career mothers who had been significantly downgraded on transition to part-time.

Agreement on suitable %FTE

There was a widespread acceptance that three days a week, or 60% arrangements, wouldn't work for most professional and managerial jobs: in this sample of 39, only six (plus the two job-sharers) had negotiated a 60% deal. All six worked for PSF. Three had unique specialist jobs developed and tailored for them, while one was in the process of moving to a more 'suitable' type of work. Only Caitlin and Carrie did 'standard' replicable jobs amongst a cadre of full-time peers, and Caitlin managed her 60%FTE by the unusual method of working five short days, which she was able to do only because she worked in a small town and lived very close to the office, so that her commute was only five minutes.

Most professionals perceived difficulties in the nature of their work (gaps in availability, delays in responses – see discourse 1, section 5.2.2), and moreover believed that while a 20% reduction in 'a job' was possible, a 40% reduction was impossible. This may have been because the part-timer was expected to continue to deliver 100% of the role (see discourse 2, section 5.3). Part-timers

themselves accepted the nature of the work as a barrier, even those who might have preferred to work three days a week.

Directly at the beginning [of the interview] I said I have three kids, and I want to work part-time. And I asked, Is it also possible to work for three days? [] And they said, well, in the senior manager function of the position they didn't believe it was going to work. And I totally agreed, I was just checking. [] I already knew three days in this kind of job, where you have to be responsible for people, for work that goes on and on, and clients will call you... Trudy, Senior manager, Tax, PSF Netherlands

Trial of suitability of part-time

A few of those participants who were unable to convince a nervous boss set up a formal trial period as a means of reassuring them.

My line manager, it was new to him, and he responded less than positively. [] He said, Oh, I don't know how this could work in the job, and I said, [] Let's do it for six months as a trial. [] And he said, to his credit, Since you put it that way, you're probably right, let's try it. Keith, Internal consultant, InfoCo UK

4.4.3 Negotiation of the 'normal' schedule of availability and percentage reduction in salary

The second building block of the PTWA was the schedule of availability for work. This schedule usually formed the basis for the reduction in salary, even though annual targets for these professional part-timers were expressed as outputs rather than hours. The 'normal' schedule was negotiated on the basis of business needs as well as personal ones, juggling team and client needs and meetings, and sometimes the seasonality of the business, with childcare, partners' schedules, and health needs.

Full-timers in both the organizations typically performed as ideal workers, working long hours (60+ hours per week), putting their work before their personal commitments, making themselves infinitely available, and having little expectation of predictable or uninterrupted time off (discourse 1, section 5.2.2). A problem therefore arose around how to define 80% of infinite availability. This understanding of full-time or 'normal' work automatically constructed anyone who needed predictable or uninterrupted time off during the 'normal' working week as 'other' or 'difficult' (see discourse 3, section 5.4.2).

The changing status of Friday

Friday was often the preferred day off, for both business and personal reasons. From the business perspective, Friday was the day when fewer people were at work, more people worked from home, and there was less expectation of availability for interaction, meetings or client-facing work. In the Netherlands in particular, where half the workforce are part-timers, this critical mass has shifted expectations of availability on Friday.

It's a lot more difficult to explain that you cannot attend a meeting on a Thursday than on a Friday. [] It's more normal that Fridays are difficult to plan things. If people take days off, it's always on a Friday. If people work part time, it's usually on a Friday. So Friday is an easier day to not be available than it would be on a Tuesday or a Thursday. Andre, Senior manager, Tax, PSF Netherlands

Full-timers tended to use Fridays for individual work, rather than interactive work, so email traffic might be just as heavy because people were catching up on emails rather than having meetings: but the critical difference was that rapid responses were not usually expected.

Friday's normally a day that people kind of clean up their own desk and kind of you know, look through all the emails. So I noticed on a Friday I get a lot of emails from people that kind of think, Oh yeah, I have to do

something about that you know, let me push it somewhere else. Anneke, Marketing manager, InfoCo Netherlands

From a personal perspective, Friday linked to the weekend, and provided a three-day break from work.

It's also like 'informal Friday' you know, you see people dressed differently, [] people typically go for lunch just a bit longer, it's a bit more kind of the start of the weekend... [] So for me it also makes sense to have the Friday off because you see everybody kind of slowing down a little bit on the Friday. Anneke, Marketing manager, InfoCo Netherlands

Part-timers could also tap in to an emerging social scene on Fridays for particular groups of people. Keith identified a group of those approaching retirement who are not at work on Fridays: he called this group 'the Friday set' – and also self-identified himself as someone who was 'ready' to join this social scene as he moved away from ideal worker and towards retirement.

I can be part of the Friday set. I'm ready for that at my stage in life. [] It's typically older people if you like, or it might be people that are unemployed, or young mums or whatever. [] I don't feel I'm skiving! It's natural. I'm ready. I'm ready for this. That's the Friday set. Keith, Internal consultant, InfoCo UK

Friday was also the day when working parents, particularly mothers, could socialize with other parents and their young children.

[My wife] and I had juggled childcare between us a bit and [she] quite quickly started to realise actually Friday's quite a nice day for her to have off. [] I think [my wife] prefers her [] Friday off, that's typically when all the other mums have time off as well. Alan, IT project manager, InfoCo UK

Dealing with predictability of schedule

Discussion of predictability – the degree to which the time off during the working week was fixed or floating – involved consideration of both business and personal impacts. A few flexed their working days week by week, while most were able to switch their working and non-working times only with advance planning. Days and times might be fixed to allow clients and colleagues to get used to the schedule, so that they wouldn't be inconvenienced by constant switches (see section 4.5.5).

The degree of contactability during time off also varied with personal and work circumstances, and with cultural expectations. It was an individual responsibility to organize part-time work without impacting on colleagues and clients (see discourse 2, section 5.3), and a professional responsibility to continue to service clients and other business needs (discourse 3, section 5.4), so the part-timer often promised to be available for work during their time off.

The key thing that [my counsellor] put to me, which I think was a really good point, was he said that you had to make it work for both you and the firm [] and how are you going to make sure that your clients aren't going to be stressed and are still going to be serviced even though you're part-time. So I remember writing down that I've got a BlackBerry, if people want to reach me. Carrie, Assistant director, Transaction tax, PSF UK

However, non-work elements of their lives (typically childcare, but also leisure activities) were important to part-timers, and some wanted to give regular and *uninterrupted* time to them, even during the 'normal' working week.

The sense of always having to be on, always be available [] I felt that would not really match the life I try to live at home. [] If you can just pick up the phone if you hear it – what can you do? I have no internet on my boat and I don't even have 220 volts mains on my boat. I'm offline. So it's, it's a... my work life balance. Tjarko, Internal consultant, InfoCo Netherlands

4.4.4 Negotiating workload

The transition from full-time to part-time was often perceived to be easier within the same job and organization, because the potential part-timer had a performance record, a relationship with the hiring manager, and, of course, possession of the job.

Last year we had voluntary redundancies. I have been here a while, I could have got a good pay-out, but [] when you have the internal, well, people know you, and, you know, your track-record etc, it makes it [part-time] a lot easier. Patricia, Marketing manager, InfoCo UK

Applying for a new job on a part-time basis was regarded as harder – the ‘ultimate test’ of part-time work – because the relationship and track record would be missing.

I might go back to being a software engineer for another company. [] Whether I would ask to work 80% say for that company, I mean, you can always ask, right? [] You know, that would be the ultimate test, wouldn't it? [] Is someone going to employ you from scratch on those terms? I suppose it depends how much they want you really. Eric, IT project manager, InfoCo UK

However, the negotiation of full-time to part-time within the same job also represents a loss of resources to the organization, when the part-timer ‘buys back’ time which the organization previously had access to. Selling the organization an 80% chunk of time or outputs, before you join or start the job, doesn't involve taking something away from the organization. Veronica suggested that women returners (assuming that there had been cover during their maternity leave) had a great opportunity to start with a low %FTE after maternity leave, and build up gradually, if appropriate.

It's always easier to start lower and build it back up. Rather than set yourself up for a fall and say, I'm going to come back [from maternity leave] five days a week, [] why don't you just say, I'm going to come back four days or three days, because it's always easier to build it up

than it is to take it all on and then say, I don't want it. And it's easier both from kind of communicating it to other people but also how you feel about yourself, because if you're having to say to people, I don't want that any more, you feel like you've failed somehow, don't you? Veronica, Senior manager, Tax, PSF UK

Analysis of this sample suggested that when it came to arranging an appropriate workload, the important factor was not so much whether the part-timer was switching job, but whether the job pre-existed the part-time person as *a full-time job*. In other words, a feasible workload was harder for those part-timers who either transferred from full-time to part-time in the same job, or stepped into the shoes of a predecessor who did the same role on a full-time basis. Those who created or developed the job as *a part-time job*, either after removal from another role, or as new hires taken on as part-timers, were more likely to be able to achieve a feasible workload. In this sample of 37 (excluding the two job sharers), 25 part-timers took on a pre-existing full-time job, and 12 (including those removed from 'unsuitable' jobs) created a new job as a part-timer. Figure 2 represents the different types of negotiation of workload arising from different contexts, and the number of participants in each context.

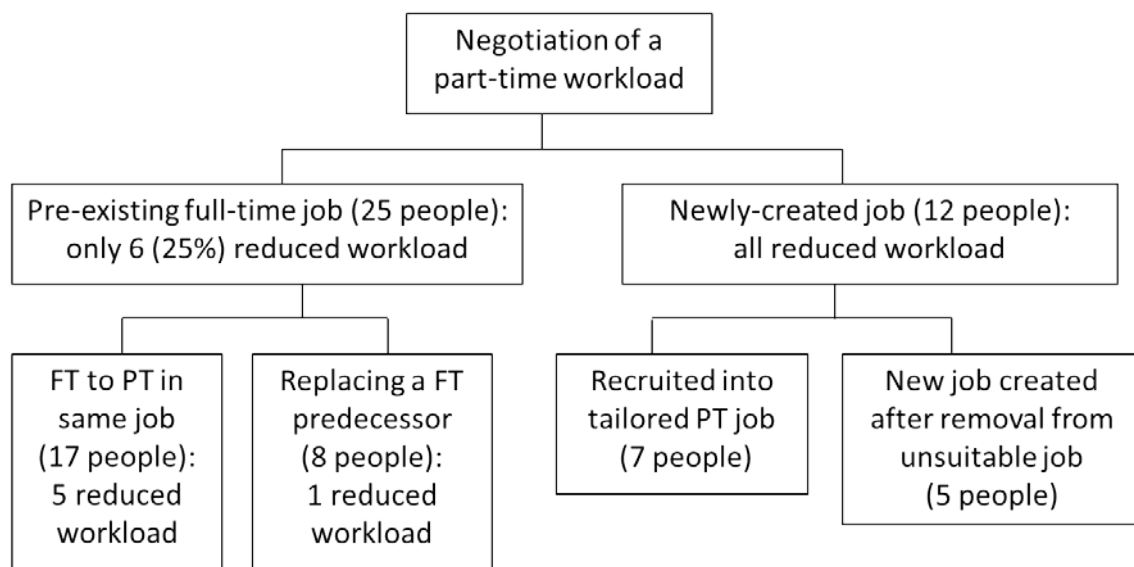


Figure 2 Contexts for negotiating a part-time workload

Negotiating workload for a formerly full-time job

Negotiating an appropriate scope of responsibility for a part-timer was a double problem: first, it was regarded as difficult to define units of analysis for professional work (apart from time) with which to split up a previously full-time job, although some targets (e.g. sales targets, billable hours) were easier to pro-rate than others, and were formally pro-rated by a percentage equivalent to their percentage reduction in pay; and secondly, individuals taking on a formerly full-time job often had nobody to hand over 20 or 40% of their work to. Mostly, however, the difficulty of defining objectives and workload was resolved by leaving it to the individual to work out how much to take on as the part-time job developed (see section 4.5).

Fiona did not regard it as a contradiction that her counsellor, who warned her against continuing to take on a full-time-equivalent workload, gave her no practical help or advice on how to make that happen: in fact, she was careful to point out how supportive PSF was (see discourse 2, section 5.3). Although she learnt how to reduce her own workload over time, initially she continued to deliver full-time-equivalent outputs.

Within PSF, they're very, very supportive of the concept of flexible working, it's more the kind of, how do we make that happen? [] He [the counsellor] did say to me, It's important that you don't just [] get paid for four days and end up working five. [] Basically in the first year my portfolio, didn't actually change at all. So there was kind of, noises around, If the portfolio has to change or whatever, let us know. But there wasn't anybody that I could really hand it over to. Fiona, Senior manager, Assurance, PSF UK

Transferring from full-time to part-time in the same job

Seventeen participants in this study transferred from full-time to part-time in the same job. Only five of the 17 managed to negotiate some kind of reduction upfront, although some others reduced workload through job crafting at a later

stage. A director such as Paulus could delegate workload to other people in his team, while retaining the same scope of responsibility.

A director, you work seven days a week but I am only working four days.
[] My responsibilities don't change, because they're still there but I only have four days to take care of the things to be my responsibility. Paulus, Director, Assurance, PSF Netherlands

However, those who didn't manage a team, such as Anneke, had nobody to delegate directly to.

For me it's only the Friday so they don't see me as part-time, I have the same amount of work as everybody else. It's not like [] they give you, you know, a project less because you're only working part-time. [] So I do the same amount of work in four days instead of in five days. Anneke, Marketing manager, InfoCo Netherlands

Consistent with the discourse of part-time as a personal choice, and therefore a personal responsibility (discourse 2, section 5.3), the pressure to meet challenging team targets, and not to 'let down' the team or organization, was strongly internalized. Wilma and Catrien both worked in sales, where the targets were starkly numerical, providing an easy unit of analysis for reducing the individual target: however, the *team* targets were not adjusted to recognize the individual reduction in labour.

There's the target that I get for my team and there's the target on which I'm paid, and the target on which I'm paid is indeed adapted to say the 80 per cent. The target of the team and the pressure of the team is not adapted. [] My manager, they are pushing on the complete team target and if I do less, it means that other people need to do more. Wilma, Account manager, InfoCo Netherlands

Part-timers in this situation had to intensify their work effort and be an above average performer, in order to achieve team sales targets and compensate for the 'personal choice' to work part-time.

The target has not changed because I decided to work 20% less [] but I do have to work harder to make sure that I get there. I can't afford to be just an average worker and being a part-timer. That wouldn't give me a good feeling. That would mean that me working four days is really impacting my work, and I am not being a good performer; being an average worker is no good. Catrien, Account manager, InfoCo Netherlands

Replacing a full-time predecessor

Eight participants in this study replaced a full-time predecessor: five of these were promoted or recruited into a part-time job as a direct replacement for a full-time predecessor, and three more at PSF were promoted into a cadre or pool of full-time peers with widely-held expectations of the workload, working hours and career progression which constituted 'the job' of, respectively, senior manager and executive director. There was no discussion of 'losing' part of the job: they were just expected to perform 'the job role' in less time, for less money. Three were from outside, five from inside the organization; what mattered in terms of workload was that they were stepping into a full-time predecessor's shoes, a pre-existing job role which still had to be delivered without impacting on colleagues (see discourse 2, section 5.3), so there was no immediate workload reduction.

Then the [PSF] role came up and it was the same situation there, you know, it is a five day a week role but, and I said, Well, I work four days. Not a problem at all, if you ever want to do five days let us know, if you're confident that you can manage this role in four days then we're happy. [] So it works around you as long as you're delivering your job. Adele, Marketing manager, PSF UK

Wanda transferred internally into a job previously held by a full-time predecessor: again, there was no discussion of reduced workload. In her previous job, she had carefully delegated sections of her role to others when

she went part-time, but this time didn't do so, because she felt she didn't know the work well enough to be able to delegate effectively. Consistent with the discourse of part-time as a personal choice and responsibility (discourse 2, section 5.3), she categorizes this as a failure on her part, rather than expecting her line manager to provide any kind of input into how the job might be reduced to a more appropriate size for a part-timer.

I changed roles about six months ago to a different team and I wasn't quite as diligent with setting up what needed to be done with my new team as I had been when I first moved to part-time in my old team. [] I didn't really set it up, is the truth. I just kind of rolled into it. [] I kind of needed to understand what the team was doing at that time, so I wouldn't have been in a position at that time, to delegate out any of my role because I didn't know what it was, because I was still in 'fact finding'.
Wanda, Technical director, InfoCo UK

Reducing workload in a formerly full-time job

Although they were the minority, six of the 25 participants who took on a previously full-time job achieved workload reduction at the point of transition: three of these were helped by a line manager who reallocated workload to colleagues; and three developed their PTWA in circumstances where the department had little work on, or a project had come to an end.

The manager's ability to reallocate workload to others was constrained by commercial circumstances. As mentioned above (section 4.3.4), where the team was growing, the line manager could take on extra resources to compensate for the reduction in the part-timer's workload.

The job role, by the person who had covered for me on maternity leave had actually, sort of, expanded even further. And so it was quite easy to keep him and me, and give him part of the role, and me [] a smaller part, and easily dissect the role in two. Patricia, Marketing manager, InfoCo UK

Another example of a reduced workload being agreed with the line manager came from Veronica, who had managed to reduce workload without restriction in a previous job, at an earlier stage in her career, when she was one of a pool of relatively junior tax accountants who could be staffed onto different projects interchangeably. The reduction wasn't detrimental or limiting for her, because her counsellor made sure she had a good balanced portfolio.

We tried to work on a portfolio that meant I didn't have these tight turnaround small jobs. [] So my counsellor at the time was a senior manager and we sat down and said, OK, well what's going to work and what isn't. [] My portfolio's been kind of carefully constructed in a way that allows me to take that time off without clients really missing me. Veronica, Senior manager, Tax, PSF UK (referring to previous job)

The second situation in which workload could be easily reduced for someone transferring to a previously FT job was when the workload in the team happened to be low. Stille's department was new and was over-resourced at the time of interview.

I'm not overloaded with work so it's not that stressed, [] I stick to the hours, the 32 hours that I am contracted to. [] Often I would like to have more work. I am always looking at, what can I do now? What can I do next? So that's also, I mean if there's loads of work to do, then it [part-time]'s a different story. Stille, Sustainability project manager, PSF Netherlands

Negotiating workload for newly created PT jobs

Those part-timers creating a new job (12 in this study), rather than transferring FT to PT within the same job or stepping into the shoes of a FT predecessor, were better able to tailor a reduced workload. Seven participants in this study were recruited into jobs created for them as part-time jobs, and five more had new jobs developed around their needs after removal from an 'unsuitable' job. Although there was no evidence of the workload being discussed during the

hiring negotiation, all of them described a reasonable workload in that, although they delivered more than they were paid for, it was in proportion to the full-timers who did the same: in other words, they worked the appropriate percentage of equivalent full-timers' actual, rather than contracted, hours.

Well as a senior manager you are not being paid the overtime, so my contract was 32 hours but you work more actually. [] But I also said, Well, if your contract hours are 40 you work perhaps 50 or 60. If your contract hours are 32, you work 40, but not 50 or 60. Melanie, Senior manager, Assurance, PSF Netherlands

This group often had unique jobs, tailored around their specific needs; there was no direct comparison with other people at their level. Simone was headhunted for a full-time job in The Hague, but was in a unique negotiating position as the country's leading expert on her particular tax specialization. Her 'credit' in the market (see section 4.3.3) was such that PSF offered her a 3-day job in her home town, and also took on an additional full-timer with a similar (but less extensive) specialization to complement her role; Simone therefore represents an unusual example of resourcing being discussed at negotiation stage.

They went on looking for a supplement on my specialisation [] and finally they also found somebody else who went to work full-time in The Hague so the result is that [] I work, not only locally, [] but rather for the whole country with my specialisation. [] We work together as well. [] My knowledge is so specialised that I'm considered an expert and that means that one of my tasks is to share my knowledge as much as possible. Simone, Senior manager, Tax, PSF Netherlands

4.4.5 Negotiating a career plan

There was an almost universal perception that working part-time required a different career plan, consisting of either slower progress up the hierarchy, or a definition of career success which focused on other types of development (see

chapter 5). In keeping with the concept of part-time as an individual choice and responsibility (discourse 2, section 5.3) – or possibly because they were so focused on achieving their immediate transition, and didn't feel that they had the 'credit' to bargain for a future career as well – most part-timers didn't mention discussing their career plans with their line manager at the point of transition to part-time.

I suppose in my head I just accepted my career was over for a while. I did, I definitely, I kind of made that adjustment and thought, OK, fine, I'll focus on the family and I'll kind of keep my hand in. Natasha, Operations manager, InfoCo UK

Naomi was one of very few part-timers in either organization who made a deliberate attempt at the negotiation stage to counter the widespread perception that part-time necessarily signals a lack of ambition and results in reduced opportunities for promotion. She made it clear that she accepted slower progress while she was working part-time, but that her aspirations hadn't changed, and she expected to return to her upward trajectory at a later stage. This may indicate a strong career identity, or a confidence in her bargaining power not shared by other participants – or possibly she benefitted from the recently implemented supportive culture at PSF.

I was really keen to explain that ultimately I do still want to go to the next level and maybe ultimately partner, but [] it's just that it will take me longer to get there. I wanted to make sure people understood where I was coming from, and that they didn't make assumptions. Naomi, Senior manager, Tax, PSF UK

4.4.6 Summary of section

This section has described the formal request and negotiation of a PTWA, and the four elements which make up that arrangement: the suitability of the job role, the 'normal' schedule of availability, the workload or responsibilities, and career expectations after the transition to part-time. Negotiation of the first

element, suitability of the job, resulted in a quarter of this sample being downgraded. Negotiation of the fourth element, career, was often unarticulated: part-time was assumed to have a negative effect on career.

Although managers and professionals don't normally express their deliverables in terms of time, the negotiation concentrated more on the second element of the PTWA, schedule of availability, than the third, workload and deliverables: the terminology is *part-time*, not *part-results* or *part-output*. It was the schedule of availability that formed the basis for the percentage reduction in salary, so one day off per week was assumed to be equivalent to 80% of a job. Workload and responsibilities were typically not reduced upfront, although it was easier to achieve a feasible workload for those entering a newly-developed part-time job than for those who were taking on a formerly full-time job. When transferring from full-time to part-time in the same job, it was difficult to reduce one's workload without restricting it to particular kinds of work.

The problem of what to do with the 20-40% of the workload discarded by a new part-timer was unlikely to be solved at individual level without work intensification (which was unacceptable to some), but the discourse of individual responsibility for implementing a PTWA (discourse 2, section 5.3) obstructed the discussion of this question at a team level. Individual part-timers were often left to develop and manage a feasible workload *after* the negotiation, as shown in the next section.

4.5 Adapting the part-time working arrangement

4.5.1 Section introduction

After the formal negotiation, some part-timers began an informal, unauthorized process of adapting their part-time job to meet the needs of their clients, colleagues and boss, as well as their own personal needs. A few part-timers in this sample found that the type of work they did became gradually restricted, but most continued to do the same type of work, while adjusting both the workload

and the schedule of availability. The nature of the work, the available resources, and the willingness of team colleagues to adapt all affected the degree to which the part-timer could achieve a feasible workload and a predictable and uninterrupted schedule of availability. Consistent with the discourse that part-time is a personal responsibility, not an organizational one (discourse 2, section 5.3), the adaptation was driven individually by the part-timer; some even chose not to mention their new part-time status to colleagues or clients. Where part-timers were more open, however, there was more opportunity both to enrol colleagues and clients in helping to manage their schedule of availability and, where appropriately qualified people were available, to reduce their own workload through delegation.

Adaptation might continue throughout the life of the PTWA, in response to changing work and personal circumstances, but the period of intense adaptation to engineer a feasible job was the first 6-12 months.

4.5.2 Post-negotiation restriction of type of work

Three of the part-timers who kept their jobs at negotiation stage found that, over time, the type of work they did changed or became restricted. Carrie, who worked in fast-paced M&A, found she gravitated towards smaller deals. The pace of the large deals, and the requirement for constant availability to clients, made it impossible to hand over her responsibilities to a junior on days she wasn't there, but she didn't construct this as a lack of a substitutable resource to cover her absences: instead, referencing the discourse of personal responsibility (discourse 2, section 5.3) she rationalized this as inevitable for someone who had chosen to only work three days a week.

You tend to do less of the absolute killer deals. [] You stop getting asked – but in the right way. [] When I started noticing this I talked to [my counsellor] about it and he said, [] Remember back to the ones you have done and think about whether you think you would have been happy for that work to be done by the juniors you're working with, or you would

pass to the partner, or how would you have dealt with that. And when I gave a proper, proper think to it, I was like, I think we'd be short-changing them. Carrie, Assistant director, Transaction tax, PSF UK

In total, 25% of the participants in this research had to leave or partially restrict their role, shifting to more 'suitable' work at negotiation stage or soon afterwards: even though the two research organizations were selected for their support for flexible working, and the Netherlands operates one of the most part-time-friendly economies in the world (see chapter 2), these 10 people came from all four research sites. It was the perceived 'nature' of the work (discourse 1, section 5.2) which restricted the type of work they could do: at InfoCo, team management was perceived to be impossible part-time; at PSF, working in fast-paced, unpredictable M&A was impossible on a part-time basis; while others found themselves restricted to working with smaller and less important clients or projects. Opportunities for a quality PTWA were therefore determined not only by the national legislative framework and organizational policy and culture, but also by local-level context – the perceived nature of the work.

	Removed from 'unsuitable' role	Part-restricted to more 'suitable' work
At negotiation stage (ie negotiation of <i>current</i> PTWA)	Jeroen, InfoCo Netherlands Nienke, InfoCo Netherlands Tjarko, InfoCo Netherlands Christine, PSF UK Margreeth, PSF Netherlands	Patricia, InfoCo UK Elinor, InfoCo UK
At adaptation stage		Carrie, PSF UK Eric, InfoCo UK Melanie, PSF Netherlands

Table 7 Restriction of type of work done by part-timers at negotiation and adaptation stages

4.5.3 'Coming out' as a part-timer to colleagues and clients

At the previous stage, preparation, part-timers had had to confront both their own identity assumptions and those of their line manager and organizational culture when preparing to request part-time. They now had to manage the identity messages they presented to colleagues and clients in the context of varying discourses and understandings of the meaning of part-time and part-timers (see chapter 5).

A few part-timers hid their part-time status entirely; a few chose to broadcast it openly to everyone. Many more decided to 'manage' their status and working-hours messages, constructing different messages for different audiences, and balancing authenticity in their identity as a part-timer with the constraints provided by other people's perceptions of the meaning of part-time in the surrounding organizational culture. The two organizations provided different contexts for 'coming out': caution, and sometimes secrecy, about being part-time was the norm at InfoCo, but at PSF, the recent organizational initiatives on flexible working had made part-time much more acceptable.

Hiding one's part-time status

Since part-timers might be stigmatized as insufficiently client-centric or business-focused, or as lacking in commitment or ambition, some actively hid their part-time status.

On the bottom of my email [] I hadn't put it [part-time status] on there; it feels a bit kind of like, Well you *should* maybe be there. [] That I'm just not around to deal with stuff that might be important to the client. Roisin, Business development director, PSF UK

A strong discourse in parts of InfoCo was that successful part-timers were those who hid their part-time status. The categorization of part-time as an individual choice and responsibility (discourse 2, section 5.3) combined with the discourse

of part-timers as 'other' or less professional (discourse 3, section 5.4), with the result that the invisibility of one's part-time status was read to mean delivering a good performance.

Sometimes people don't notice you work part-time and that for me is a real success because if they're not noticing then obviously they're getting what they need from you. Elinor, Tax manager, InfoCo UK

One longstanding InfoCo part-timer feared that if she broadcast her part-time availability, she would be perceived to be incapable of doing the job, and would be downgraded.

I've never advertised the fact that I'm part-time, I think probably because I didn't want that, I don't know if 'stigma' is the right word but again because it was so rare, I didn't want people thinking, Oh, she can't do the job because she's only part-time, or not asking me to do things, [or] We always have to work around her. [] And that is immediately what the mentality of InfoCo is: if you can't cope with the job we'll put someone else in the role. And I guess that's always been my fear. Florence, Business development manager, InfoCo UK

Managing disclosure of one's part-time status

Most part-timers carefully managed their availability messages after transition to part-time, both in conversation and in email signatures and out-of-office messages, and often varied these messages depending on the nature of their relationship with different individuals. While Wanda was open about being part-time to some of her colleagues, she wasn't comfortable with putting it on her email signature or out-of-office, for fear that it would be perceived as a lack of commitment.

I say, I'm on leave today, and I don't write 'I work part-time' [on the out of office] and that's a conscious decision. [] I think it's because if I get those out of office from other people I think, Oh it's alright for you isn't it?

There's a little gremlin in my head. [] It's the commitment thing again, Oh you're not very committed to this are you? Wanda, Technical director, InfoCo UK

Some part-timers deliberately built up client confidence and relationship before 'coming out' as a part-timer, in order to avoid perceptions of not being available, especially in client-facing roles.

With clients, do you turn round and go, Well actually I work part-time? You want to build up that credit, to build up that respect before you, you know, say it. Caitlin, Director, Assurance, PSF UK

Broadcasting one's part-time status

A minority of participants decided to broadcast their part-time status right from the start, telling clients and colleagues, and using an email signature and 'out of office' which stated their working hours. At PSF, recent intranet guidance encouraged broadcasting one's availability, and using email signatures to announce working days and hours. This official line had made part-time much more visible, and encouraged some part-timers to 'come out'. The meaning of part-time had changed.

Recently I have now, under my name I have 'working from Monday to Wednesday' because I found out that that's accepted, I used to think that was not accepted in PSF to have that in your address, in your signature. [] On the intranet, it was really guidance, how to fill your signature and there it was. [] So I edited my signature and most of the time I enable the 'out of office'. Melanie, Senior manager, Assurance, PSF Netherlands

Two other groups 'came out' in this way: those who had already fulfilled their career ambitions (some of them approaching retirement; others not interested in climbing the corporate hierarchy); and those who self-identified as pioneers and wanted to act as a role model for working mothers.

When people are coming back from maternity typically, or more unusually if a man wants reduce hours, I do always make it my business to go and talk to them about the challenges and the advantages and how I find it works for me. Cassandra, Partner, Tax, PSF UK

4.5.4 Adapting workload or responsibilities

As shown in the previous section, the negotiation stage often resulted in part-timers being responsible for FTE workload or responsibilities. However, at the adaptation stage, some began a further process of engineering an appropriate workload, with clients and colleagues as well as managers, reducing workload gradually over the first few months (sometimes up to a year) of the PTWA. Most part-timers did this alone (discourse 2, section 5.3.2): either they gradually handed over projects to others, or they cut out networking and development.

A few part-timers involved their teams, and had even enrolled team members in redesigning working practices to make a part-time workload more achievable. This was still an informal, individual initiative, not an authorized team or organizational one – and was of course only possible if the part-timer had ‘come out’ – but nonetheless represented a move towards seeing part-time as a resourcing issue, rather than a personal lifestyle choice and responsibility (discourse 2, section 5.3.3). Team-based adaptation practices offered much greater opportunities for reducing the part-timer’s workload: delegating upwards, sideways or downwards might be possible where the team had, or could build, capacity and appropriate skills.

Individual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Active wastage on project portfolio • Cutting out networking and development activities
Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delegating upwards (pushing back to manager) • Delegating to subordinates • Delegating sideways (to peers) • Building team resources over time

Table 8 Techniques for reducing workload/responsibilities

Individual practices to adapt workload or responsibilities

There was a limited number of actions the individual alone could take to adapt their workload or responsibilities: some managed to gradually offload projects as they came to an end; most had to cut out networking and development activities.

‘Active’ wastage on project portfolio

‘Active’ wastage on transition to part-time involved either handing over specific projects to other people who had spare capacity, or managing the workload downwards by not taking on projects that didn’t fit within the time available to the part-timer. There was no qualitative change in the nature of the part-timer’s portfolio, so this process was not determined by the perceived ‘suitability’ of the work, but by the part-timer’s desire to achieve a manageable workload. Those few part-timers who did this found that it took a few months for the workload to wind down to an appropriate level, and this might involve the newly part-time in working (unpaid) overtime or long hours during the period of adjustment.

I was able to transfer some of the engagements [] to another manager who had been promoted to manager just shortly after that, so it very gradually resolved it. [] I saw it coming up so I saw the possibility and I was able to explain that to the resource partner that that was coming up and [name] could take over my work there at the client, and that was one of the bigger clients. Jan, Senior manager, Assurance, PSF Netherlands

Part-timers also had to exercise the self-discipline not to take on more work during the adjustment period. Paulus suggested that work would contract to fill the time available.

The first month it’s a little bit... you have to get used to the situation, but once you’re just working four days, you will have work for four days. []

And you are disciplined to make sure, well, I'm working four days a week, that's it. And that works. Paulus, Director, Assurance, PSF Netherlands

In effect, this adjustment period enabled the organization to calibrate the workload to the resource levels now available – except that it was the individual rather than the organization which took on this responsibility (discourse 2, section 5.3).

Cutting out networking and development activities

A very common way of part-timers reducing their workload was to reduce their participation in social interaction and networking.

Whereas before, I might drop by someone's desk and have a chat with them for five minutes or something, I didn't really do that anymore, I was much more about, Right, I need to get in there, I need to get the stuff done that I need to get done. Roisin, Business development director, PSF UK

Part-timers also reduced their involvement in development activities which were not regarded as a core part of the job. In order to meet even their pro-rated targets for their day-to-day activities, most part-timers felt they had to sacrifice at least some of their long-term development work.

I suppose I don't have time to think about it [development] which is where you get to isn't it? You do the day job and you try to do what you're supposed to do and it is just that there's not much time to think about anything else. And perhaps the development [] does go to one side a little bit because there isn't time to do it. Christine, Assistant director, Corporate finance, PSF UK

It wasn't only formal developmental projects which were sacrificed, but also taking on profile-raising special projects or internal process improvements, broadening the range and diversity of types of client or project, leveraging client

relationships to win new business – in other words, aspirational activities which again do not form a core part of the job but which are key to getting promoted.

There's not always time for just calling up a client to see how they are or if you can help them out. So you just focus on your work now and that bit of extra, there's not always time for that. [] You're just doing what you need to do. Before, you were also wondering, How can I improve something? [] You're now just doing the job. Marloes, Managing consultant, Tax, PSF Netherlands

The consequence of cutting out these types of activity was that part-timers gradually lost the networks necessary for career development, and the opportunities to demonstrate their potential for promotion. Losing these developmental activities enabled part-timers to manage their short-term workload but they were aware of the long-term consequences for their career.

I have still got to, which I have only just got to thinking about, build my network up again; because obviously [as a part-timer] you are not interacting so much, so you are pretty siloed. [] Because you are head down, [] and I am a lot more, I would say, productive, in a sense. The flipside is I need to, like I say, balance my networking... [] which is very key at InfoCo, in order to progress. Patricia, Marketing manager, InfoCo UK

Team practices to adapt workload or responsibilities

Team-level changes offered many more opportunities for reducing workload than individual-level changes. Participants reduced their workload by delegating upwards to their manager, downwards to their subordinates or sideways to peers (characterizing part-time as an issue of team resourcing, rather than personal choice and responsibility – see discourse 2, section 5.3). A part-timer who was overworked at the negotiation stage might also be able to build extra team resources over time.

Delegating upwards: pushing back to the manager

Many employees at PSF worked for multiple managers, being part of a floating pool of people staffed on to different projects with different managers. Where a part-timer worked closely with a single manager, it was easier to negotiate workload based on a single set of priorities.

You do have to be really quite disciplined and push back, and [my manager] is very good in that she recognizes that. [] She'll say to me, Can you cope with doing that, [] or shall we get help from somewhere else? [] Even if it's just an informal conversation rather than some kind of formalized process of work allocation. Patsy, Inclusion and diversity project manager, InfoCo UK

Delegating to subordinates: reducing workload but not responsibility

Team managers were often well placed to continue to deliver the same team objectives by delegating more to team members, while reducing their own workload. Although team managers had their own challenges in working part-time (see section 5.2.2), the ability to delegate facilitated part-time for managers. They could maintain the same responsibilities, because they were delegating to people who reported to them, while non-managers who wanted a reasonable workload might have to give up some of their responsibilities to people who reported to a different line manager.

In order to delegate more, managers needed subordinates with the appropriate skills, client relationships, willingness and available capacity. Some had eager, capable subordinates who wanted to take on more.

So you had someone who is keen for promotion or who wants to show their managing skills, deliberately we tried to make them work with me so that on my days off they could show they could run the project and that was good for them as well. Carrie, Assistant director, Transaction tax, PSF UK

Client relationships and client-specific knowledge also had to be shared in order to reduce the part-timer's workload. This had to be proactively organized at early stages of a project or client relationship, so that confidence and trust could develop before the colleague was required to deliver in the part-timer's absence.

The senior consultants, they worked on some cases as well, and they were really involved, and knew the clients, so what I did was also leaving certain clients to them, so that they were the first contact person. Of course they always have to involve me, because I have to sign, but that's a little bit the way I did it. Trudy, Senior manager, Tax, PSF Netherlands

Delegating sideways: negotiating workload with peers

Some participants negotiated workload and resources with peers, discussing with team colleagues how work should be distributed amongst the team. The organizational structure at PSF, which consisted of a cadre of 'floating' professionals at a similar level who were staffed on to different projects with different managers depending on the resources available, meant that people at the same grade had the same technical expertise and therefore were, to some degree, substitutable for each other, so spikes in workload could be managed by sharing workload among one's peers.

I do have colleagues who are at the same level as me in the national team. We try and be very accommodating with each other. [] Often we will say, I am going to be particularly busy next week, has anybody around the team got a bit more capacity?. We have [] those sorts of conversations weekly. Naomi, Senior manager, Tax, PSF UK

It was important to avoid the part-timers' pitfall of offloading unwanted work onto overworked colleagues, without their consent, or cherry-picking the most interesting projects; instead, there had to be an element of 'fair trade' with peers.

You've got to be smart about it. [] So if I'm constantly perceived as the one that has a really firm opinion about, I want to do this project, but not that one, my peers are not going to like me. So I need to know what is their preference, what are they good at? Clara, Operations manager, InfoCo Netherlands

Building team resources over time

If resources could not be found immediately to help reduce the part-timer's workload, it might be possible to build team resources over time. Adele worked in an internal service function at PSF, rather than as a consultant, and had developed the extremely counter-cultural practice of recording her actual (rather than contracted) hours as a means of obtaining extra resources, so she didn't have to work overtime.

The firm requests that we fill out our time sheets according to our contracted hours. I always record the actual hours. [] That way it's easy to review and recognise when support is needed. [] We were under resourced for about six months, if not longer and I was working an extra like 10 hours a week or something at times. [] We've managed to get someone in our team to support, so that's good. Adele, Marketing manager, PSF UK

4.5.5 Maximizing predictable and uninterrupted time off

The initial negotiation of the PTWA often focused more on the schedule of availability than on the scope of responsibility, so a 'normal' or intended schedule was usually in place as the PTWA came into effect. However, the default position in managerial and professional work (see discourse 1, section 5.2) was constant availability to the unpredictable needs of the business and the clients. Moreover, part-timers' gratitude for being granted the 'perk' of part-time work (discourse 3, section 5.4.2) meant that most expected to make themselves

available during their time off: they simply accepted interruptions to time off as a necessary part of their work.

Those few part-time managers and professionals who did slow, predictable and independent work found it easier to achieve their 'normal' schedule without interruptions. For the rest, various individual and team-based techniques were employed to create predictable time out from the 'normal' working week, and to protect that time out by minimizing interruptions to it, as shown in the table below.

Individual	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Proactive project management to maximize predictability• Resisting interruptions during time off
Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Clarifying expectations of availability• Enrolling others in maintaining schedule and avoiding interruptions• Dealing with unpredictable events during absence:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Organizing cover• Emergency contact protocols• Robust processes

Table 9 Techniques for maximizing predictable time off and minimizing interruptions

Individual practices to maximize predictable and uninterrupted time off

The principal individual-level technique for maximizing predictability was proactive project management. Without team support, the part-timer had very few options for dealing with any unpredictable events which couldn't be 'organized out', unless they were prepared to simply accept the interruption: willpower in resisting interruptions was one option.

Proactive project management to maximize predictability

Standard practice for dealing with unrealistic deadlines, especially for more junior people at both PSF and InfoCo, was to work on into their evenings and weekends, so a 'crisis' or 'fire-drill' mentality was common in both organizations. Paulus avoided this by shifting from crisis mode to predictability mode. This was counter-cultural when professional work was perceived as necessarily requiring long and unpredictable hours (discourse 1, section 5.2).

If you organise a lot of things up front there's less panic because panic is causing long days. [] I think it's a key part of part-time work. [] I'm more in a proactive mode to make sure that I'm not getting into panic mode. If you're used to work[ing] in a panic mode, working part-time is almost impossible. Paulus, Director, Assurance, PSF Netherlands

Part-timers had to employ project management skills to maximize the predictability of their work, planning ahead to pre-empt problems, and managing deadlines and diaries around gaps in availability, in order to avoid, or at least minimize, interruptions to time off.

I think there are things that certainly by the time I get to Thursday, there are things that I'm doing to try to minimise the impact on Friday. And earlier in the week I'm probably trying to work ahead to minimise having to work on Friday. Alistair, Director, Tax, PSF UK

Negotiating deadlines, and pushing back when deadlines were unrealistic, were important skills for a part-timer who wanted predictable or uninterrupted time off. Pushing back required confidence, which was hard for part-timers already concerned about being perceived as lacking commitment or professionalism (discourse 3, section 5.4).

I think it took me quite a while to adjust to being part-time. [] I think I just got better at setting realistic deadlines. [] If I think actually there's going to be a problem, then I will have that dialogue upfront, rather than me agree to a deadline and then not be able to meet it. [] I think that does

take time to develop the confidence to feel that I can do that. Naomi,
Senior manager, Tax, PSF UK

Resisting interruptions during time off

Over time, some part-timers developed the ability to set firmer boundaries, so that they could give priority to other life roles and resist the temptation to check the smartphone during time off. Resisting interruptions contradicted the discourses that the 'nature of the work' was unpredictable (discourse 1, section 5.2), and that professionals always put work before non-work roles (discourse 3, section 5.4). Some part-timers, particularly those with caring responsibilities, had strong personal reasons to resist interruptions, to protect important non-work roles or life values – but it might take a while to construct a confident, coherent identity which allowed a part-timer to see themselves as professional and at the same time committed to a non-work role.

I think I have become better at drawing boundaries. [] You know, we are not brain surgeons, no-one will die; this afternoon is for my kids. [] I think it took a lot of adjustment for me also to really become more clear about, you know, I don't get paid for it anymore, and I am not available. [] I think I have just become more realistic, honestly, to just say you can't do two things at the same time. Nienke, Tax lawyer, InfoCo Netherlands

Where part-timers had constructed part-time as a resourcing issue, and had reallocated tasks and relationships to their team members, resisting the smartphone might be characterized as effective delegation. Paulus had trained up his juniors, and had confidence that they would deliver in his absence; constantly checking the smartphone would represent a lack of trust.

Having a lot of confidence in the people who are working for you, that helps. [] If I wouldn't have confidence that things were going right or that they're doing the right thing, that would drive me crazy. [] You'd better be sure that they are prepared, that you trust them, that they know what they're doing. Paulus, Director, Assurance, PSF Netherlands

Team practices to maximize predictable and uninterrupted time off

Adaptation practices which involved other team members offered much greater opportunities for achieving predictable and uninterrupted time off than did individual adaptation practices. Techniques included clarifying expectations of availability during time off, enrolling others in maintaining the schedule and avoiding interruptions, and making alternative arrangements for dealing with unpredictable events during one's absence.

Clarifying expectations of availability during time off

One of the techniques for maximizing predictable and uninterrupted time off was to clarify and articulate everyone's expectations of whether or not, and to what degree, the part-timer should be available on their days off. Naomi checked with her boss and found she had been misreading the intention behind his Friday emails; he hadn't expected an immediate response.

[My boss] would always send me emails on my day off, which I would assume was because he wanted an immediate answer. But, actually, having had the conversation, it was just getting through their inbox. [] He didn't expect me to respond immediately, they knew I wasn't in the office. So I think a lot of the pressure was actually coming from myself. Naomi, Senior manager, Tax, PSF UK

On the other hand, Tjarko's original expectation was that he wouldn't check emails on his days off: it was only after an explosive argument with his manager that he clarified that his manager had the opposite expectation. Tjarko decided to do occasional checks on his emails on Friday, not so much because there were urgent actions, as because it allowed him to demonstrate to his boss his continuing responsibility and commitment (discourse 3, section 5.4). This was an exercise in managing perceptions, not a need arising from the nature of the work.

I decided from that point onwards [after the argument] to look at my phone on Friday mornings. And sometimes [] by just responding, Yeah

thanks, I'll look at it on Monday, that's enough [] for my manager, it gives him apparently the feeling [] that I do care about my company at the moments that I'm not online, [] that I'm not away too much. Tjarko, Internal consultant, InfoCo Netherlands

Enrolling others in maintaining the schedule and avoiding interruptions

Proactive project management required part-timers to be open about their schedule of availability. By maintaining a regular and openly communicated schedule of availability, part-timers gave their colleagues and clients a chance to adapt to their schedule.

Make the client aware that I'm not there, make them aware that if there are questions others can resolve as well to contact the others, and instruct the team at the time, issues that might be coming up, how to respond to it. So it's organisation but also communication, I think. Yeah, and just being responsive to avoid the things to happen. Jan, Senior manager, Assurance, PSF Netherlands

Those who were 'out' as part-timers could also enrol others in planning projects around gaps in availability and so minimize the project management burden on themselves.

You depend very much on your team, so I was always very open with my team as to what I was doing and what I wasn't doing. I think if you take your team with you they will help you enormously through that and they will work around you in some ways. So they'll do things to fit in with me and I would do things to fit in with them. Cassandra, Partner, Tax, PSF UK

This strategy obviously involved the cooperation of other members of the team, and some colleagues were more willing to respect boundaries than others. Carrie found that those who had experience of part-time working were more respectful of boundaries.

So some deals, I've got the right person beneath me, and I may be working with [the partner], so she's already part-time, so she's more respectful of it [part-time] because it's what she does herself, and we just kind of rattle it through. Carrie, Assistant director, Transaction tax, PSF UK

It might therefore be necessary to train colleagues to respect boundaries, which might take a few months. Time and persistence were needed to train others in maintaining a schedule, and not setting up meetings or calling on the part-timer's day off.

They know when I'm around, when not, [] the teams that I work with, [] they know that I'm not around on Fridays. So from that point of view the expectation has been set properly. It took me about half a year I guess, but by then they knew. I needed to be a bit stubborn in the beginning. [] You shouldn't give in too easy and then, you train people pretty quickly when you're there, when not. Tjarko, Internal consultant, InfoCo Netherlands

Dealing with unpredictable events during absence

The ease or difficulty of dealing with gaps in availability depended partly on the 'nature' of the work (its pace and unpredictability – see discourse 1, section 5.2) but also partly on the resourcing available to cover gaps in availability. Given that it was not possible to 'organize out' all unpredictability, some part-timers had to manage some degree of unpredictable work or interruptions to their time off. Some had no urgent calls during their time off because of the slow or predictable nature of the work; some arranged for colleagues to cover despite doing fast and unpredictable work; and some had to take calls themselves.

A few had little requirement to be contactable during their time off because the work itself was slow-paced enough that responses could wait a day or two: no cover was needed.

I think if somebody has a question and it needs to be solved, you have to determine whether it's very urgent or not. [] And of course, it helps that in my specialisation, [] most of the time it's not necessary to have the answer tomorrow. It's also the kind of work that you do that's very important. Simone, Senior manager, Tax, PSF Netherlands

A second group worked in faster paced or more unpredictable environments but had suitable colleagues who could provide the necessary information or decisions to service clients, colleagues or managers in the part-timer's absence. Clara had put in place robust processes and protocols for others to follow during her absence, which is somewhat reminiscent of organizations which run truly 24/7 operations such as emergency services; interestingly, Clara was in fact managing a 168-hours-per-week operation, dealing with network outages for clients. In her department, there was not only a 24/7 schedule of emergency cover, but also a set of protocols and processes to follow in case of an incident. This gave her the confidence to take time off, knowing that her juniors would be able to follow processes: as she pointed out, such incidents can anyway happen at any time of the day or night, including weekends, so time off during the 'normal' working week was no different.

If something goes really, really wrong, theoretically I could be pulled in, my manager would be pulled in, and my whole chain could be pulled in. [] So that made me nervous, like but that can happen any day, there's no rule that says there will not be heavy network outages on a Friday, or on a Saturday, or on a Sunday. So I was a bit wary of that, but I think if there is [] a robust process and an organisation in place, it should not depend on *people*, it should depend on, Are there sufficient people on shift. Clara, Operations manager, InfoCo Netherlands

The third group had to provide their own 'cover' and so were subject to interruptions during their time off. Fiona was managing client contact on days off because she had been paired with an assistant manager with the same day off, so there was no appropriate cover. Fiona's director, consistent with the discourse that the part-timer is responsible for the success of PT (section 5.3.2),

provided no practical support: rather than challenging this teaming for the project, or managing client expectations, or even providing emergency cover himself, he had merely enjoined her to 'not feel guilty' about not being at work.

Unfortunately, the assistant manager that we've got on the job, she doesn't work Fridays either, so we're looking at the next person down to see if that person would be an alternative contact. And mostly I've picked up when they've emailed and said they need something doing urgently. [] And then they kicked off rather this Friday about something. [] But the director is actually quite annoyed about it because he knows that they know and he said that we shouldn't feel guilty about not working on a Friday. Fiona, Senior manager, Assurance, PSF UK

4.5.6 PTWAs at time of interview

Intense adaptation of the PTWA, as described above, happened in the first 6-12 months, but after this there was an ongoing process of occasional adaptation to changes in both work and non-work circumstances. The process continued until the parting of the person from the arrangement: when the part-timer left the job, the PTWA dissolved.

Availability schedules at time of interview

As has been stressed in many of the quotes in this section, it took time for part-timers to establish alternative working practices, and train their colleagues to respect them. If the part-timer got a new boss or colleagues, the training began again.

There's new people in the team and they don't know I don't work on Friday so they start planning meetings on Friday and then you have to say, Well actually I don't work on Friday, if it's anything urgent, more than happy to attend but I'm not going to do a weekly call on Friday, you

know, then you have to find another day. Anneke, Marketing manager, InfoCo Netherlands

There was no point at which the arrangement became 'fixed', but the schedule of availability might need to remain in place if the part-timer had fixed non-work commitments. On the other hand, it might change by mutual agreement if the part-timer's non-work commitments changed.

I came back [from maternity leave] to Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and the reason why we changed was just because we had additional support from my husband's parents [] so it made sense for me to be working the days that they could help. Veronica, Senior manager, Tax, PSF UK

Although the schedule of availability might change over time, at the time of the research interview, the participants had achieved one of three availability outcomes, defined according to the degree of predictability in their schedule and interruption during time off. About a third of participants in this study ended up in each category, with no discernible pattern in terms of organization or nationality, suggesting that the important influences were local, ie the manager, the team, the individual's personal needs or the 'nature' of the work.

Availability outcomes	Number of participants
Predictable time off with no interruptions	11
Occasional (emergency) contact only during predictable time off	13
No expectation of predictable, uninterrupted time off	12
	36 (excludes two job sharers & one 'short' full-timer)

Table 10 Participants' availability at time of interview

Workload at time of interview

Workload also changed over time. The part-timer might learn more effective delegation, or find an opportunity to build extra resources at a later date. Workload might also increase over time, perhaps because a team member left, or because of the business cycle, or simply because the part-timer took on too many projects. For example, Alistair had little work at the time of transition to part-time, because his two-year project had just finished, so he was able to work within part-time hours. However, at the time of the research interview, his workload had crept up again and he was working the equivalent of a full-timer.

At the time of the research interviews, participants had achieved one of three workload outcomes, based on the degree to which their workload and responsibilities had been reduced. There was no discernible pattern in terms of nationality or organization, suggesting that more local factors, such as the nature of the work, the skills and capacity of the team, and the individual's own ability to deliver 100% outputs in 80% time, were more important than the outer context of national or organizational policy.

Workload outcome	Number of participants
Workload reduced	17 people (of whom 10 had been removed or part-removed from their previous roles on transition to part-time)
Retained FTE responsibilities but reduced personal workload	7 people (all team managers who retained FTE management responsibility, but reduced their personal workload, by delegating to members of their team)
Retained FTE responsibilities and workload	13 people
	37 (excludes two job sharers)

Table 11 Participants' workload at time of interview

Career expectations at time of interview

Just as the PTWA shifted over time, the part-timer's identity work was never finished. Changes in the arrangement or the context might lead to further identity work for the part-timer, creating or dissolving tensions between different life roles and commitments. At the moment of the research interview, some participants had resolved these identity tensions; others were in the process of doing so.

Participants were also in different places as regards their career. Some had come to terms with a slower career progress or a career plateau while working part-time; some were considering alternative career paths (or, in the case of retirees, were progressing towards no paid work at all); some were determined to remain on the 'normal' career path; and some were subject to conflicting tensions. The following table represents the different possible career statuses: since career wasn't a focus of the interviews, it wasn't always possible to categorize participants precisely, but rough figures for this sample of 39 are given in the table.

Career plateau until return to FT (6-8 participants)	I suppose I've put my career on hold, while being part-time, because again the impression is that being part-time wouldn't sit well with a management position. So that was the big impact. So for me it was more important to put my career on hold and keep the same type of role, as opposed to going for promotion. Florence, Business development manager, InfoCo UK
Alternative definition of career success: not expecting to climb hierarchy (14-15 participants)	I was off work for about half a year and then I gradually grew back into the work, [] and those were the days that I really re-valued what's important in life. [] I've got a good job and I love it. So I decided that it's not, it's not really necessarily to be... well, as high as possible in the organisation. [] In the end I decided to become an individual contributor, an expert in one specific area. Tjarko, Internal consultant, InfoCo Netherlands

Ambitious to climb hierarchy; may slow down, but expect promotion as part-timers (6 participants)	What I can't do is leave it and sort of give up on all the hard work, [] and be so far down the ladder that I'm never going to climb back up it again. [] I want partnership now, I've worked hard for it. Veronica, Senior manager, Tax, PSF UK
In conflict between career and non-work roles (10-13 participants)	One of the things that really helped me, [] they had this business lunch for women in PSF. [] I had questions, I thought I would not be promoted because I worked part-time. Still in a way I probably think that way, but I have hope now that with doing the right things, even working part-time I can still work myself up. [] Before then, I felt there is no future for me because I work part-time. Margreeth, Operations manager, PSF Netherlands

Table 12 Participants' career expectations at time of interview

4.5.7 Summary of section

The adaptation of the PTWA was intense in the first 6-12 months after the formal agreement. For a few part-timers, there was a gradual restriction of the type of work they could do, but most continued to do the type of work agreed at negotiation stage, while adjusting both the scope of the job and the schedule of availability.

One of the first elements of adaptation was deciding whether and how to 'come out' as a part-timer to colleagues and clients, particularly when a good performance rating might require the invisibility of one's part-time status, such that the part-timer was in fact performing like a full-time ideal worker whose non-work roles were not allowed to impinge on work roles. Although no doubt convenient for the manager and the team, for the part-timer this involved hiding part of their identity along with their part-time status.

The nature of the work, the available resources, and the willingness of team colleagues to adapt all affected the degree to which the part-timer could achieve a feasible workload and a predictable and uninterrupted schedule of availability. Consistent with the discourse that part-time is a personal responsibility, not an organizational or team one (discourse 2, section 5.3), much of the adaptation was conducted by the part-timer alone. However, some part-timers, particularly more senior ones, extended their options by enrolling colleagues and clients in helping to manage their schedule of availability and provide cover during their absence; and, where appropriately qualified people were available, by delegation to reduce their own workload.

The process of adaptation of the PTWA continued until the parting of the person from the arrangement – in other words, when the part-timer leaves the job, which is when the PTWA dissolves. Throughout the existence of the PTWA, the part-timer might also re-evaluate work-in-life, depending on both work and non-work circumstances, so this formed a continuous cycle of identity work and adaptation of the process.

4.6 Chapter summary

This chapter has described the transition to part-time as a process over time, in four stages, and has also shown how that process was enclosed within a process of identity work for the individual: figure 3 summarizes the first process; figure 4 the second.

Developing a PTWA

Some individuals in this study started thinking about the transition to part-time long before they start actively preparing for it. During the evaluation stage, some made the decision (later rescinded by all the participants in this study) that departure from their job or organization, or remaining full-time, would be

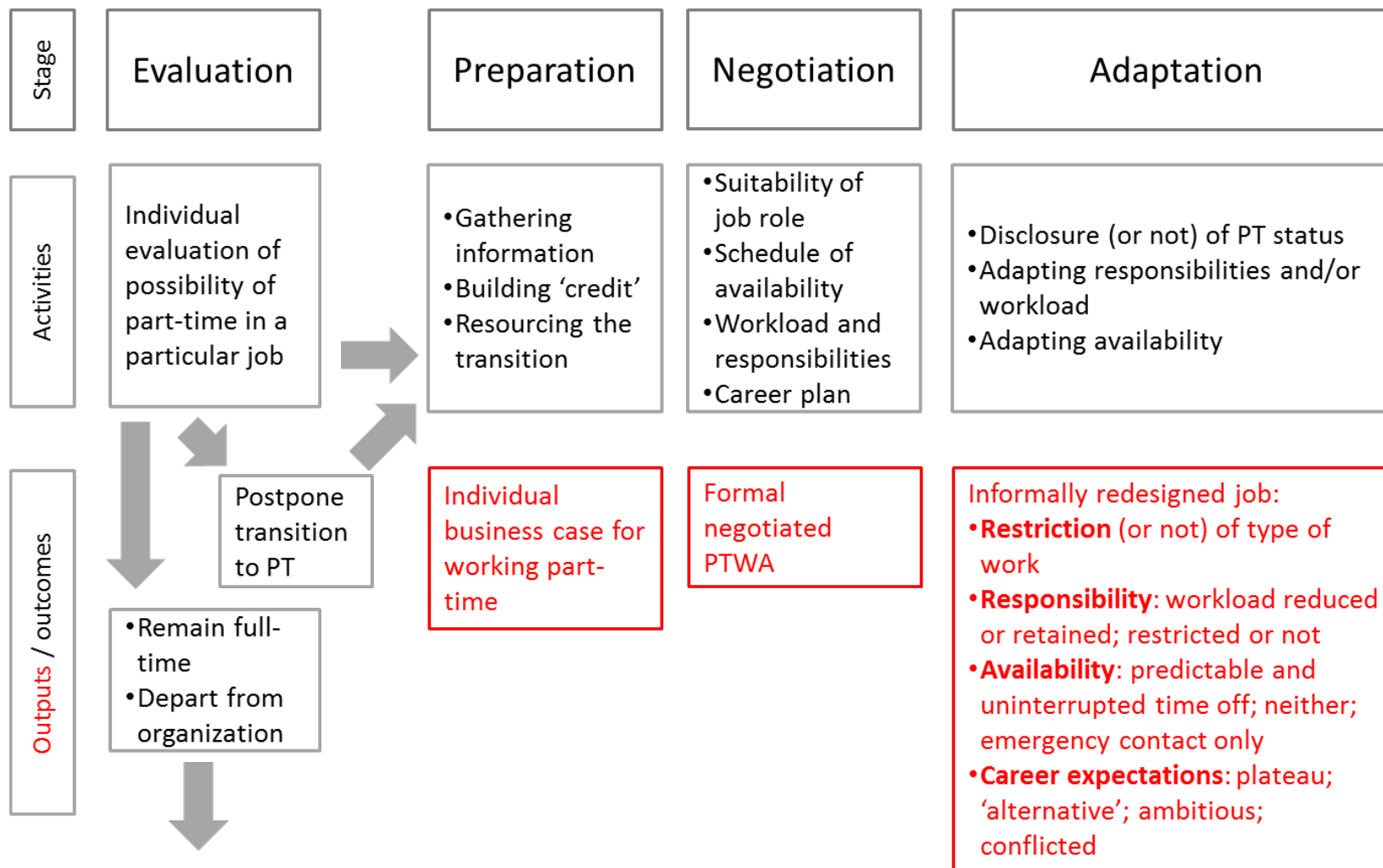


Figure 3 Stages of development of PTWA, with outcomes from each stage

better options; others postponed the transition to part-time. Reasons might include the legal or policy environment, the organizational culture or manager, or tensions between non-work roles and career or professional identity.

During the second stage of the process of transition to part-time, individuals prepared the case for part-time in a particular job - gathering information, building up credit with the line manager or the hiring manager, or planning and timing the resources to fill the gap left by their reduction in workload. The final element of preparation was constructing a professional part-time identity which fitted the local context, in preparation for 'coming out' to the line manager.

The third stage, negotiation of a PTWA, involved the formal request to work part-time and discussion of the elements which made up that arrangement: the suitability of the job role, the 'normal' schedule of availability (which formed the basis for the reduction in salary), sometimes the workload and responsibilities, and the (mostly unarticulated) career implications of a transition to part-time. Four contexts for negotiating a part-time workload were identified: when a full-timer transitions to part-time in the same job; when a part-timer replaces a full-timer in a pre-existing job; when a part-timer is recruited into a newly-created job tailored to their needs; and when a new part-time job is created for a part-timer removed from an 'unsuitable' job. Workload was more likely to be appropriate in the last two (which involved creating a new job) than the first two (where a part-timer replaced a full-timer).

Some significant elements of the PTWA, in particular the workload, and sometimes the degree of contactability during time off, were negotiated *after* the formal negotiation, when part-timers began the final stage, adaptation, an informal process of crafting an arrangement which worked for them, for their clients, colleagues and manager. The nature of the work, the available resources, and their ability to persuade team colleagues to adapt all affected the degree to which the part-timer could achieve a feasible workload and a predictable and/or uninterrupted schedule of availability. Although much of the process was conducted by the part-timer alone (consistent with the discourse that part-time is a personal responsibility, not an organizational one – see

section 5.3), those part-timers who enrolled colleagues and clients in helping to create a workable part-time arrangement had many more opportunities for workload reduction. This was, however, only possible if the individual had 'come out' as a part-timer: some preferred to keep their part-time status hidden for fear of compromising their professional identity or career potential (discourse 3, section 5.4). Team managers might be able to delegate workload to capable and ambitious subordinates without losing scope of responsibility.

The discourse of part-time as an individual responsibility rather than a team or organizational one (discourse 2, section 5.3) limited the options for redesigning work, but the reconstruction of team working practices facilitated the emergence and development of a PTWA even when the 'nature' of the work was fast, unpredictable and interdependent. However, a third of this sample continued to deliver full-time-equivalent outputs; and a third had no expectation of predictable and uninterrupted time off. There was no discernible difference in these outcomes between the four research sites, suggesting that constraining factors were local as well as national or organizational: the nature of the work, the manager, the skills and resourcing capacity of the team, or the individual's own skills and needs. A quarter of this sample ended up in some way restricted in the types of work they could do.

Overall, the process of developing a PTWA felt fragile. It involved jumping a lot of hurdles: lack of legislation, organizational policy, organizational culture, a poor manager, lack of 'credit' or appropriate resources to hand work over to, and, particularly if the work was fast or unpredictable, unhelpful working practices with insufficient substitutability or predictability. Individuals required persistence, patience and commitment to their profession and organization, as well as a degree of luck, to make it across these successive hurdles.

Professional identity work at each stage

The development of the PTWA was enclosed within a process of identity construction for the individual. If this was the individual's first PTWA, its

development might coincide with the development of a new life role or life stage (parenthood, the approach of retirement, the onset of a caring role or health problem). If the part-timer was an ‘old hand’, coming from a previous part-time job in a different team or organization, the *personal* identity work might be less salient, but *professional* identity work might still be needed as the part-timer worked out how PT was perceived in this new team or organization. The professional identity work at each stage is represented in figure 4.

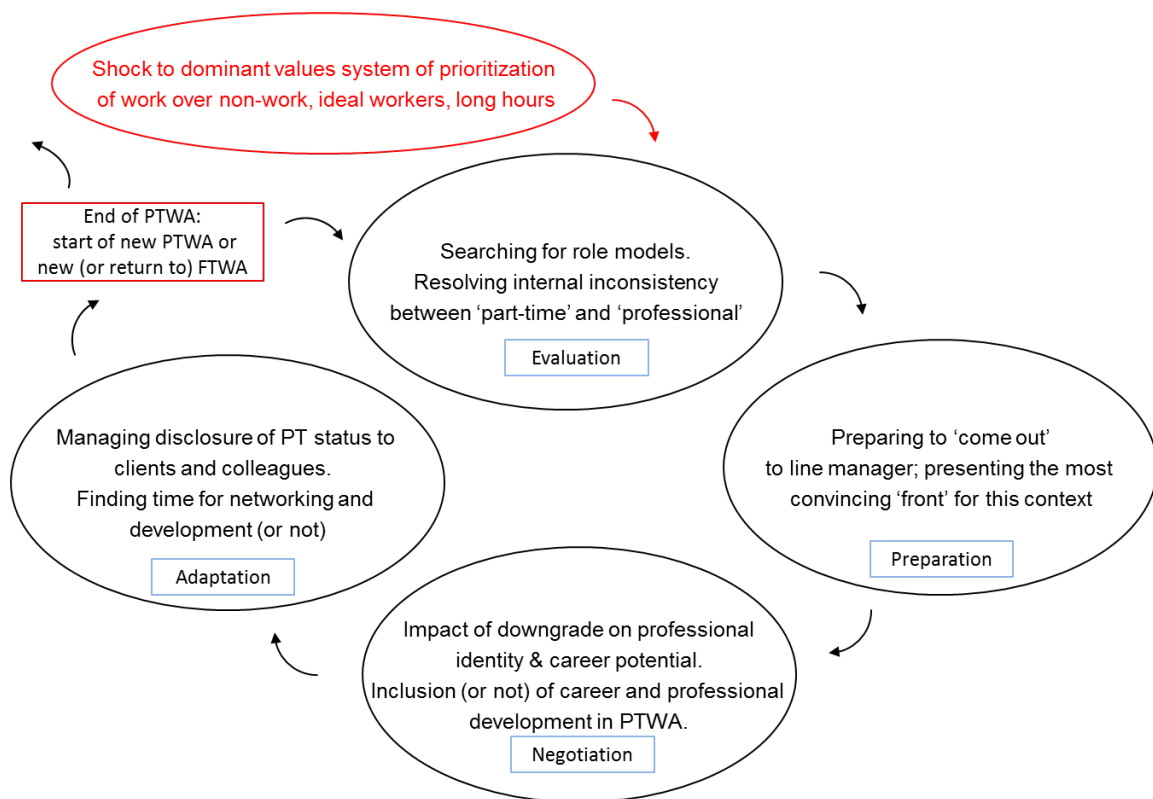


Figure 4 Identity work relating to each stage of development of PTWA

Although this research has not focused on participants’ reasons for working part-time, it is interesting to note just how much of a shock to the system was involved in getting these work-oriented, committed professionals, working in large corporate organizations where ‘ideal workers’ were the norm, to re-evaluate the place of work in their lives. The re-thinking of life priorities, sometimes characterized as a realization that ‘there’s more to life than work’, tended to involve life or death: either the birth of children or (presentiments of)

death – traumatic events such as the death of a family member, or a life-threatening accident or illness. Only five of the 39 participants had made the transition to part-time *without* such life-or-death experiences. Eleven (eight men and three women) had suffered trauma; while 27 (21 women and six men) mentioned childcare as a primary reason for working part-time. Four mentioned both trauma and childcare.

As an individual's career developed, the four stages might form a continuous loop, such that experience of developing one PTWA became part of the context for the individual to develop their next one.

5 FINDINGS: DISCOURSES OF PART-TIME

5.1 Chapter introduction

Even within the same team, organization and society, the meanings and understandings of part-time varied in this study. Legislation, and the working-hours culture, have changed in the past 15 years, particularly in the Netherlands, but to a lesser extent also in the UK. Organizational policy has also developed: PSF had implemented policy initiatives to support and encourage part-time work in the three years before these interviews. In these environments, part-time officially no longer had its 'old-fashioned' meaning as an option for mothers whose husbands are the main breadwinner, who need a rigid, inflexible schedule of availability, who expect an automatic downgrade to more junior or back-office type of work, and who have no further ambition to climb the career hierarchy. However, the traditional meanings of part-time still pertained among various individual colleagues and clients, and those who made the transition to part-time a long time ago may have had long experience of battling these understandings. Part-time professionals in this sample therefore worked within a changing set of meanings of part-time, often not openly articulated.

This chapter identifies three sets of discourses relating to part-time working. The three dominant discourses tended to constrain both the options for developing the PTWA and the raw materials available to the part-timer for constructing a professional identity. Opposing discourses facilitated the development of a PTWA: these were minority discourses in the contexts studied. Sub-discourses within each of the three types of discourse will be identified in the rest of this chapter.

Type of discourse	Dominant discourse	Opposing discourse
The nature of managerial and professional work	Part-time isn't suitable for some types of work, because of the nature of the work	Any job can be done part-time with the right resources and working practices
Responsibility for PTWAs	Part-time as a personal lifestyle choice and personal responsibility	Part-time as a team or organizational issue
Categorizing part-timers	Part-timers as 'other' because of their non-work roles	Part-timers as the 'new normal'; every worker has a non-work life

Table 13 Summary of dominant and opposing discourses of part-time

5.2 Discourse 1. The 'nature' of managerial and professional work

5.2.1 Section introduction

The first set of discourses of part-time work concerns the 'nature' of managerial and professional work. A very strong discourse across all the research sites was that some types of work cannot be done part-time, although the two organizations had different perceptions of the type of work that was unsuitable for part-timers. Professional and managerial work was perceived to involve long and unpredictable hours and rapid responses, to meet professional standards of quality, to service clients, and to compete in the commercial world. This discourse suggested that constraints on working part-time are the fixed and immutable characteristics of the work itself. Managers and professionals, whether full-time or part-time, could not expect predictable and uninterrupted time off, because their priority was to make themselves available to meet organizational needs or professional standards.

Challenges to this discourse were in the minority, but formed the foundation for many of the adaptation techniques discussed in the previous chapter. Such challenges suggested that constant pace, busy-ness and availability to unpredictable demands were cultural practices rather than fixed characteristics of the work, and that the demand for immediate responses was occasional rather than uniform. Different working practices were not only possible but desirable.

5.2.2 The nature of the work: managerial and professional jobs can't be done part-time

Hours and outputs don't match

It was regarded as difficult to match hours and outputs in a professional or managerial job, whether full-time or part-time. Meeting quality standards and commercial needs trumped all questions of how many hours were worked, whether full-time or part-time, so work just continued until it was finished. The very idea of 'professional part-time' is therefore problematic: by setting limits on the time they give to their work, part-timers may be understood to be failing their clients, or failing to meet quality standards.

All my working life, I've never thought about hours. Hours is just an irrelevance, you just have the work you do, the outcomes you give, and that's what it is. As long as you're motivated and stimulated by the work, then that's great, and that's the prime motivator, and that remains true. [] The contract, [] it's so meaningless in most professional roles – a thirty-seven and a half hour working week or something... [] but you know what you have to do. Keith, Internal consultant, InfoCo UK

Of course, full-timers don't have infinite time or capacity either, but the label 'full-time' was understood as a total commitment: 'full'-timers were perceived to have no time boundaries to their jobs, because they always put work first. Time-appropriate schedules or objectives for part-timers were therefore hard to define.

InfoCo is a very committed company and everyone works very, very hard. [] A lot of InfoCo jobs don't have any boundaries. [] It's not a week that you can carve up – it's difficult to carve up an undetermined amount of time. Susannah, Operations manager, InfoCo UK

Unpredictable (client-facing, team-managing) work is unsuitable for part-timers

Most commonly, client-facing roles were believed to be unsuitable for part-timers because of the unpredictable nature of client demands. The work required professionals to prioritize work over non-work (discourse 3, section 5.4).

I didn't get to my friend's wedding. I got to the reception, but I didn't get to the service. [] The timing was crap, but you really can't tell when people are going to call. I think the partner was on holiday as well so it was just, pick up the baton. Carrie, Assistant director, Transaction tax, PSF UK

The need to be available to meet the unpredictable needs of subordinates in your team was another very common discourse, particularly at InfoCo, where team management roles were generally regarded as unsuitable for part-timers.

Part-time works when you are not a manager. When you are a manager things need to change, because, say, one of your employees needs you Thursday/Friday, [and] there are certain [] important meetings you need to attend. Patricia, Marketing manager, InfoCo UK

The need to be available to your boss was also mentioned by some, particularly those with ambitions to rise up the corporate hierarchy, who felt that being available displayed commitment and ambition.

My leadership team [] has an expectation of me being available, my manager and director, that are the kind of upper management for me, they count on you to be there, and to take on certain activities that are

being delegated or requested. Being online and being available are a pretty important factor. Jeroen, Project manager, InfoCo Netherlands

Fast-paced work is unsuitable for part-timers

The discourse that part-timers were unable to deliver in a timely fashion in a fast-paced environment was also strong. Responding *quickly* to clients was an important marker of being commercial and competitive, and it was also important to avoid delaying colleagues on a project or programme of work. This inability to respond rapidly was exacerbated by lower %FTE, so three-day working arrangements were seen to be more difficult than four-day arrangements.

If you receive an email on your free day and you are not able to answer it until the next day, well sometimes it's difficult. [] It would be very difficult if you're not at the office two days a week. There would be too much time between; your reaction time on things would be too long. Stille, Sustainability project manager, PSF Netherlands

Where the work was fast-paced, part-timers missed out on the flow of information and the progress of projects, both of which were calibrated to the working hours of full-timers.

You miss out on work sometimes, firstly I have the feeling that I have to start up all over again, like you do on a Monday after a weekend break. [] And that's what you are missing out on, just knowing what's going on and what needs to be done and not to be surprised. Marloes, Managing consultant, Tax, PSF Netherlands

Interdependence, autonomy and schedule control

Junior jobs were sometimes perceived as harder to do part-time because those at more junior ranks lacked control over their schedules and had to follow other

people's timetables, while a more senior manager was more likely to be able to set the timetable to suit their own schedule.

When you get to a certain level I think it's significantly easier to say, Deliver by *here*, so I can review *here* to get *here*. I think that someone who is a grade or two below me might find that as a part-timer, [] the time tracker on that can be quite tight. So the final information comes in, you go through it on the Monday/Tuesday, you try and deliver on the Wednesday to me, minimum, to deliver to [the partner] on Thursday, so she can review it before she's off on Friday. I don't know if they'd manage to cope with that. [] I wouldn't be happy doing it [part-time] at that level. I'd worry that I was mucking about everyone else's timeframes. Carrie, Assistant director, Transaction tax, PSF UK

Carrie is describing a situation which is hard for junior part-timers for three reasons: first because the junior doesn't control the timetable; secondly because three people have to input into this project; and thirdly because those three people have to do so within a short timescale of just four days. While interdependence was part of the problem, it was exacerbated by the fast pace, which was constructed as necessary because of commercial competition. At PSF, junior jobs were constructed this way as part of a tradition of proving yourself in the 'up or out' career structure. Juniors were expected to work long hours because PSF was a good training ground; in return they could take their expertise elsewhere and get good jobs when they left.

A firm like PSF, it's some kind of training ground for a lot of people, they [] learn a lot, and a lot of people are gone after seven or eight years, and that's our business model. [] So yeah, they have to work fairly long hours but they get their CPA training or whatever, [] they get a lot for the time that they are working with PSF. Paulus, Director, Assurance, PSF Netherlands

Independent work, in which the part-timer didn't impact on other people, was recognized to make part-time easier.

I am lucky that I am the only one to do [] the Netherlands and Belgium, for my segment. [] So I am not really impacting anyone in the team work-wise. Catrien, Account manager, InfoCo Netherlands

However, at the same time, interdependence with colleagues was only perceived as a constraint for part-timers in fast-paced environments. If the timescale was weeks rather than hours, a day off per week allowed the part-timer sufficient flexibility to fulfil the project's needs according to their own schedule of availability; but if the timescale for completion of a task was in days or even in hours, a day or half-day off might be critical.

We have very long project timescales generally and whilst it gets pressured towards the end, I don't think anybody in the department who's responsible for the delivering we're striving for would say slipping a day is unacceptable. Alan, IT project manager, InfoCo UK

5.2.3 Challenging the discourse of the 'nature' of the work

Challenges to the 'nature' of the work were very much a minority discourse, but three types of challenge were noted: first, suggesting that constant pace, busyness and availability to unpredictable demands were cultural practices rather than fixed characteristics of the work, and that the demand for immediate responses was occasional rather than uniform; secondly, suggesting that alternative working practices would better meet the needs of both full-time and part-time workers; and thirdly pointing out that the 'difficulties' were not specific to part-timers, but actually applied to all employees.

Questioning the fast and unpredictable 'nature' of the work

A few participants, while recognizing the common perception that managers have to be constantly available to the unpredictable demands of their teams and clients, questioned the basis of this discourse in the 'nature' of the work,

suggesting instead that constant availability was a cultural practice, and therefore subject to change with appropriate intervention and training.

The importance of availability is higher for managers. I still fail to understand why that is, I think it's a cultural thing, it's part of the company culture. Jeroen, Project manager, InfoCo Netherlands

The fast 'nature' of the work was also questioned. Although the failure to respond immediately was typically interpreted as an automatic negative for the organization, a minority discourse was that constant availability was unnecessary because *real* emergencies were not very common.

People don't need you to be there 24/7. [] How many emergencies are there really? Really, really, really emergencies. I mean, it doesn't happen that often, and if it happens, well then work comes first for Monday, and the next day you compensate. Nienke, Tax lawyer, InfoCo Netherlands

In a febrile competitive environment full of ideal workers, such a perspective about what constituted an emergency was hard to achieve, and might only come with traumatic life experiences.

My husband was diagnosed with cancer two years before he actually died and [] he was saying to me then, It's a wake-up call, you need to scale back what you're doing, you've only got one life, don't spend your time working. [] I've literally now got to the point of thinking there are very few things that are actually so much of an emergency that they can't wait. [] They're only accounts at the end of the day. I think in this culture it's quite hard to let go because everybody's so target driven so you must deliver to deadline, you must respond to the clients. Fiona, Senior manager, Assurance, PSF UK

The discourse of discernment and perspective on priorities (discourse 3, section 5.4.3) might of course be a self-serving justification of part-timers' inability to deliver in a commercial environment – but it might also be a healthy contradiction of the groupthink of organizations staffed with ideal workers.

Different working practices are not only possible but desirable

Forward planning reduces unpredictability

Some participants subverted the idea that it's the 'nature' of the work that makes part-time difficult, suggesting instead that working during time off could be avoided by redesigning jobs and working processes. Unpredictability could be reduced, or even eliminated, through planning and organization.

I managed expectations of both sides. [] Seldomly something is wrong. So it might be that I'm missable, if you know what I mean, but on the other hand it's... my feeling is if you have organised your work and organised what you're doing, there's no problem at all. Paulus, Director, Assurance, PSF Netherlands

The introduction of a new approach to forward planning could extend to the whole team: Elinor's transition to part-time provoked a replacement of 'fire drills' with strategic planning.

It's a learning for the whole team because we've tended to work almost as a fire drill, you have this thing that comes in, you deal with it, you work until it's done and then you move on to the next one and even if you're working full-time that's a really tiring way to work. It's not that efficient and we learnt [] that we could push back and we could strategize. So I think it was quite empowering for the whole team. Elinor, Tax manager, InfoCo UK

Increasing substitutability enables colleagues to cover

Gaps in availability were not a problem if a colleague could substitute, but specialization of knowledge (the practice of each person having their own individual area of expertise) and client-to-worker specificity (such that only one person had a relationship with each client) were deeply ingrained in the individualistic culture. However, occasionally part-timers spoke of sharing activities or relationships with (suitably qualified) substitutable colleagues. Part-

timers were very sensitive to the need not to offload work on colleagues, and very few had created formal cover arrangements for their own absences, but some did share projects or client relationships on a more informal basis.

I have been on some very big deals over the last two years. What we've done is we've run two ADs [assistant directors] but it's fair to say that they're deals which would have required two ADs anyway, but possibly one would have been a bit more junior, [] then I've been a guiding principal for them so [] it's kind of a consulting head. Carrie, Assistant director, Transaction tax, PSF UK

Some part-timers had moved towards redefining 'covering for a part-timer's lifestyle choice' as an issue of team resourcing or client service provision. Instead of 'arranging cover' to 'accommodate' a personal choice, Trudy described 'arranging a continuous practice', which is a group-level activity, designed to provide the best possible service for clients by sharing client relationships so that nobody was indispensable.

I always involve a [] manager, and so if I am not available, and they [the clients] want to have it on Friday, say, the manager can join the meeting. So I really want it to be, the whole practice here to be a continuous practice [] between different people, in the end, because the clients need to be served, so that's the ultimate. Trudy, Senior manager, Tax, PSF Netherlands

Better knowledge management enables part-timers to keep up with progress

Another subversion of the discourse of the 'nature of the work' was the idea that missing out on information was not a problem located in part-time work, but in the lack of a good knowledge management system to keep everyone up to date with whatever they have missed during their time offline for whatever reason. A more structured, company-wide approach to knowledge management might be more effective for all employees.

The day you're not there, there will be calls and meetings, where things are discussed that require, if you want to stay up to date, a good knowledge management structure. We don't have that. You have to find another way, to find one of your colleagues or a co-worker, or a buddy, but that's all on your own initiative. [] So people make it work by themselves. [] InfoCo don't seem to think that you need to create a structure. Jeroen, Project manager, InfoCo Netherlands

Emphasizing that full-timers can't do everything immediately either

The third discourse used to challenge the idea that part-timers couldn't do certain types of professional and managerial work was to claim that the 'difficult' characteristics were a problem for everyone, not just part-timers. Clients didn't get immediate responses even from full-time employees.

I know others, even four days a week, will put an out of office, but, the thing is, no-one can respond to e-mails every day anyway, so it's quite common to wait a couple of days. Patricia, Marketing manager, InfoCo UK

5.2.4 Summary of section

This section has narrated the dominant discourse that some types of managerial and professional work cannot be performed on a part-time basis. Sometimes 'unsuitable' work was characterized as client-facing, or team management, both of which required responding to unpredictable events. Fast-paced work was unsuitable because of part-timers' inability to respond rapidly, and propensity to miss out on significant information. Further problems for part-timers were not being able to control a schedule, or doing work which required interdependence with other people. This discourse of the fixed 'nature' of managerial and professional work underpinned the framework within which the process of developing a PTWA began: part-timers who could not fulfil the

criteria of constant availability and long hours had to be ‘accommodated’ as an (inconvenient) exception to the norm – which then had implications for their identity (discourse 3, section 5.4).

The challenges to the majority discourse were: first, suggesting that immediate responses and constant availability to unpredictable demands were cultural practices and that the demand for immediate responses was occasional rather than uniform; secondly, suggesting that different working practices, such as increasing predictability and substitutability, and improving knowledge management, are not only possible but desirable; and thirdly highlighting that clients and colleagues have to deal with delays and slow responses even from full-timers. The discourses are summarized in table 14 below.

Dominant discourse: the ‘nature’ of the work means that some managerial and professional jobs can’t be done part-time	Opposing discourse: working practices are culturally constructed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hours and outputs don’t match • Unpredictable (client-facing, team-managing) work is unsuitable for part-timers • Fast-paced work is unsuitable for part-timers • Interdependent work is unsuitable for part-timers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Questioning the fast and unpredictable ‘nature’ of the work • Different working practices are not only possible but desirable: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • forward planning reduces unpredictability • increasing substitutability enables colleagues to cover • better knowledge management enables part-timers to keep up with progress • Emphasizing that full-timers can’t do everything immediately either

Table 14 Summary of discourses of the nature of the work

5.3 Discourse 2. Responsibility for PTWAs – personal or organizational?

5.3.1 Section introduction

The second set of discourses concerned how part-time work was perceived and categorized: what type of issue was it? While the dominant discourse represented part-time as an issue of personal *lifestyle choice*, the minority discourse was that part-time was an *organizational* issue.

The individual was commonly assumed to have a free choice of working hours, whatever the typical working hours and working practices in the organization. Having made their choice, the individual was then responsible for designing a feasible part-time job and managing their own career progress. Minority challenges to the dominant discourse envisaged a larger role for the organization in redesigning working practices and career structures to avoid disadvantaging part-timers; and greater involvement of the team in work redesign.

5.3.2 Part-time as a personal lifestyle choice

The dominant discourse of part-time used the language of choice: choosing working hours, designing a feasible part-time job, and managing career progression were all assumed to be individual choices and responsibilities.

Sometimes people say that they have a feeling they are not considered to be a full employee. [] It's a choice you make I think. I don't have that feeling. [] It was my choice to start working four days rather than five and there are implications. Roos, HR project manager, PSF Netherlands

While full-time jobs might be perceived as an organizational resourcing issue ('a job' as a contracted exchange of skills and knowledge in return for rewards), part-time working was categorized as a *lifestyle* choice which the organization has to 'accommodate' as a favour or benefit. In this discourse, part-time

working was seen as an individual choice, particularly for women, to privilege 'lifestyle' over their profession, organization or career development.

They [PSF]’ve given you an extra benefit almost and an option to continue in your job, but managing your lifestyle at the same time. Caitlin, Executive director, Assurance, PSF UK

Working hours are a personal choice and responsibility

In both organizations, it was perceived to be the individual’s role to choose how many hours to do, and to *resist* the long hours and large rewards offered by organizations, if they chose to do so.

I guess at InfoCo it’s up to you to work however much you want to. [] You just have to be incredibly disciplined and make some hard decisions about what you are and aren’t going to do. [] Work will fill as many hours as you give it, in my opinion. Wanda, Technical director, InfoCo UK

The organizational culture of both organizations in this study was typical of ideal workers: long hours, constant availability, and putting work before personal life. However, there were differences between how InfoCo and PSF defined their roles in part-time work.

At InfoCo there was no organizational regulation of opinions about part-time work: it was left to a personal belief system. It was not regarded as an issue of discrimination, such that the organization might prescribe attitudes and behaviour, as it might for example in cases of racism or sexism. Nor was it regarded as the type of business-critical issue which might be the subject of organizational strategy and management development, like, for example, recruitment, or leadership. There wasn’t an ‘organizational view’ on part-time, beyond a policy statement that flexible working was welcome when individuals could make a convincing business case to their manager.

At InfoCo, part-time was rare, and commonly regarded as a burden on the organization. The flexible working policy, designed for an engineering sector

company with a preponderance of male employees, focused on flexible location and (full-time) temporal flexibility, which were positively encouraged as a means of improving efficiency and productivity; part-time working was a secondary element of their flexibility framework. There was a gap between the rhetoric of flexibility and the reality of part-time work.

If you go into our recruitment sites internally, [] it ticks part-time and remote working and telecommuting and a whole stack of things. So the words are there, in many different places, to make you think that as a company it's pretty well switched on. Now, alongside that, [] is that actually common custom and practice among professionals and people in my job? Absolutely not. I'm the first person I know. Keith, Internal consultant, InfoCo UK

PSF, in contrast, had placed part-time work at the centre of its talent recruitment and retention strategy. PSF had a balance of male and female employees at entry level, but a tendency to lose women at higher levels, so its flexible working initiatives focused on part-time work as one of a range of tools (including maternity coaching, extended leave, peer support networks etc) to attract and retain mothers.

I think it [part-time] was another incentive to get people to come back from maternity leave. PSF have been really quite pioneering in terms of trying to help women especially. [] I really do think the culture they are striving for has led to working flexibly and working part-time being a lot more acceptable. Naomi, Senior manager, Tax, PSF UK

However, PSF encouraged a part-time-supportive culture for all employees, with initiatives such as flexible working 'champions' and specific training for all managers on how to manage flexible and part-time workers. Although other types of flexibility (temporal flexibility, location flexibility) were also common, part-time was the main focus, such that the phrase 'flexible working' was sometimes understood to be synonymous with 'part-time'.

I think, recently, flexible working is emerging as one of the key things to the firm's strategy, so I think that's saying that overtly that it [part-time]'s not an issue, [] that's looking to make sure that the right talent is moving forward. [] We're going through a process of everyone being trained on it [flexible working] to raise awareness, and [] how you might operate as a manager in a team where people might be working more flexibly. [] I think the [flexible working] champions and the HR people probably have more training. Alistair, Director, Tax, PSF UK

However, it's important to note that it was by no means true that PSF Netherlands was always the most supportive culture, or that InfoCo UK was always the least supportive. The department, team and manager, as well as resourcing levels, all played an important part in the perceived feasibility of part-time, as was shown in chapter 4. As the next section will show, neither organization had made the changes to working practices or career development practices which would enable a 'free' choice to work part-time.

Designing a part-time job is a personal choice and responsibility

If an employee transitions from 100% to 80% of a full-time job, something has to happen to that 20%. But instead of treating this as a resourcing issue, most individuals in this study felt that responsibility for 'making it work' fell on them. They made an individual business case for part-time at preparation stage (see section 4.3), and were also careful to avoid impact on colleagues or the business during negotiation or adaptation.

Avoiding impact on colleagues and clients: FTE workload and 'two-way flexibility'

When it came to managing workload, the discourse of part-time as a resourcing issue was very rarely evident: instead, the dominant discourse was that the individual was responsible for their lifestyle choice, and therefore for avoiding inconvenience to colleagues.

I've been open about it [part-time] but I've never discussed it with them [colleagues] as saying, We're going to need to reorganise ourselves in this sort of way, because that was for me to do. I would need to work out my method of working with them. [] You simply have to do it yourself, [] you have to organise yourself. [] It's up to the individual, me, just to organise it. Phillip, Partner, Tax, PSF UK

Within this discourse, part-timers taking on a previously full-time role had to find a way to manage a full-time workload, or what they referred to as a 'job role' (ie a full-time job) which was often assumed to be a fixed entity. The part-timer therefore couldn't assume that their manager or team would be involved in reallocating workload.

Sometimes when we're staffed well, or staffed up, then Resourcing will be saying to me, Well that's quite a small job, could you not hand that on to so and so? And there were obvious successors in place. And then at other times, unless *you* find a successor, there is nobody, and it's up to you to find a successor. Fiona, Senior manager, Assurance, PSF UK

Many continued to deliver 100% of the 'job role' in less than 100% of the time.

I actually think in reality I'm working full-time, being paid part-time. [] What I may have been doing is actually flexible working, using seven days in a different way, so rather than having five days where we do lots of stuff and two days where we don't do much stuff, I have four days when I do lots of stuff and three days when I don't do so much stuff, which is just a rebalancing. Keith, Internal consultant, InfoCo UK

Part-timers also avoided impact on colleagues and clients by making themselves available or contactable when they took time off during the 'normal' working week. This was usually constructed as 'two-way flexibility'.

I had to justify how I could meet my client demands even though I wasn't in the office all the time and that's when I think the flexibility has to work both ways and especially as you become more senior. [] You have to

give that flexibility to receive that flexibility. Caitlin, Executive director, Assurance, PSF UK

Avoiding impact on the organization: compensating for the cost of fixed-volume activities

There was a widespread recognition that there are ‘fixed-volume’ and ‘variable-volume’ elements to any job – and only the variable-volume elements are ever pro-rated down. Scalable targets, such as billable hours or numbers of projects, might be reduced by the relevant percentage on transition to part-time, but the fixed-volume elements stayed the same. The fixed-volume parts of managerial and professional jobs may include: internal (team/departmental) meetings, which also fulfil a developmental and knowledge-transfer function; people management, performance management, mentoring, or counselling; training and keeping up to date, especially in fast-changing fields such as tax; and personal admin such as client billing and expenses. These are all activities which the individual needs to perform in order to meet the requirements of their *current* job: another set of activities, developmental activities, are done by those seeking *promotion*, but part-timers frequently cut these out as a means of reducing workload at adaptation stage (see section 4.5.4).

Since a higher proportion of part-timers’ working time was taken up with fixed-volume activities, their quantifiable targets, even though pro-rated, were harder to meet than were full-timers’ targets. A full-timer who spent one morning a week on fixed-volume activities had 4.5 days or 90% of the working week to meet full-time-equivalent or ‘100%’ objectives. A 60% or three-day part-timer also had to spend one morning a week on fixed-volume activities, but had to meet 60% targets in 2.5 days, or 50% of a working week. Keeping targets constant, the part-timer had 90% of the time the full-timer had to deliver the same objectives.

The real financial targets, those were set at 80 per cent. [] You go to the same meetings. So overhead, that’s still the same, so if you work five days a week then there’s less overheads on those hours. [] It’s a bit

more difficult to get your targets if you work four days. Stille, Sustainability project manager, PSF Netherlands

So part-timers faced a double bind: if they spent time on fixed-volume activities, their pro-rated targets were harder to meet. However, if they allowed fixed-volume activities to interfere with the delivery of their pro-rated targets, part-time would look like poor value for money for their team, and part-timers would not be able to compete with full-timers in the race for promotion, or even for keeping their jobs.

I have to work more hours [than I'm paid for], otherwise I wouldn't reach the billable hours percentage. [] The better your billable hour percentage, [] the better you're respected. It's a rating point. [] If you don't earn enough money for the organisation your career will not be that long in the organisation. Arend, Senior manager, Tax, PSF Netherlands

If the cost of fixed-volume activities wasn't borne by individual part-timers (in the form of the extra work they do), it was borne by their business unit or team in the form of part-timers' lower deliverables, relative to full-timers'. Part-timers such as Arend simply assumed the cost of fixed-volume activities themselves – it wasn't articulated or discussed with their organization.

Career progression is a personal choice and responsibility

The business model in both organizations was predicated on the assumption that good employees are ideal workers who want to take on more work, to learn more, progress up the hierarchy, and earn more. Salary and promotion up the hierarchy were assumed to be key life goals, more important than other things in life, so talented employees would naturally be prepared to work long hours in order to achieve them. The typical route to promotion up the hierarchy within both PSF and InfoCo was to take on extra work, over and above your job role, rather than an assessment of potential.

The culture within InfoCo is very much, if you want to move up the organisation or be promoted or have more responsibility or more impact, then you have to be showing that you can have an impact outside of your role, number one, and number two, you need to be doing those things on a regular, consistent basis, to prove you're already working at that next level. Wanda, Technical director, InfoCo UK

Competitive individual ratings encouraged longer hours of work. The organizational culture might guilt-trip part-timers into doing more than they were paid for: not only had they internalized the need to put business before personal life, but they also knew that this behaviour would get them the ratings they needed to leapfrog their peers in the race for promotion.

So I will probably, I would say, routinely over-commit in my three days, but I know I'm doing that. [] I often think how would that actually turn out if I said, Well, do you know what guys, I've already clocked up this many hours this week and actually I'm not going to do this last call to the client or I'm not going to do this last deck... How would that affect my rating? Roisin, Business development director, PSF UK

Both organizations also used peer ratings, so the part-timers, just like the full-timers, had to get good performance ratings not just from their managers but also from their peers. Peer evaluations increased the pressure to not just deliver your objectives, but to be constantly seen to be working, and to be visible, in order to reap good evaluations from peers, who might not have a deep understanding of performance evaluation by means other than presence and availability. Some part-timers felt they needed to not just deliver, but also manage perceptions of how much they were delivering, which meant being seen to be available, and putting in the hours.

Perceptions are pretty important here. [] You do get requests from other managers, from other teams, saying, Can you please say something about this person? [] And that goes in a file. [] And so perception is important; showing that you are working hard, showing that you are a nice colleague, that you are a team player, that you are active organising

things besides work, or helping people with their work. [] It all comes back to, you know, how do people perceive me? Catrien, Account manager, InfoCo Netherlands

At InfoCo, part-timers might also be disadvantaged by bell curve evaluations within each team, which gave unsophisticated managers an easy excuse to downgrade a part-timer, and by a high level of electronic monitoring which could be used as a proxy for performance. At PSF, the typical career pattern was particularly difficult for part-timers because each cohort of trainees was expected to hit certain career milestones within a certain time period. In the competition for promotion into management and leadership roles, and eventually to partnership – a typical ‘up or out’ career structure – part-timers were at an automatic disadvantage because they had less time in which to demonstrate the range and depth of achievements needed for promotion.

The promotion and career development structures described here were assumed to be working-hours-neutral. Individual competition for promotion based on hours worked, together with the perception that the fixed ‘nature’ of the work required long hours (discourse 1, section 5.2) led to the logical conclusion that part-timers, by choosing to work less, were also choosing not to get promoted. Part-timers simply didn’t fit into ‘normal’ (neutral) promotion and career practices at either InfoCo or PSF, so they had an either/or choice: they had to give up one of the two centrally fulfilling elements of their lives. Margreeth represented an extreme example of this discourse, as she was working in M&A, where the ‘nature’ of the work was fast and unpredictable. She first described a ‘mutual choice’ to step back from her career, although clearly it was a choice she made under duress.

It was called a career limiting move, getting a baby. That’s how it felt. [] They did it all very nicely, all above board, there’s nothing I can have against them but obviously that’s how you feel. [] They made it sound as a mutual choice. [] I had to go down in rank. Margreeth, Operations manager, PSF Netherlands

She went on to rationalize her demotion as ‘my choice’.

I was a manager and so I had to go down to senior staff. I did that obviously, a personal choice again. I figured you know what, this is for the best, this is my choice, I can live with it. [] I am ambitious, I don't like... I mean I made some choices in life to go down, but it doesn't mean it took my ambition away; I just made different choices at different times. You can have both, just not at the same time. It's kind of what I realised. Margreeth, Operations manager, PSF Netherlands

A common discourse therefore was that part-time necessitated a career pause or plateau, which might involve a demotion, or refusing a promotion – but this was something the individual had chosen, in order to fulfil other roles.

They actually offered me a more senior role that I declined. [] As a mum and as working four days a week, I didn't want to overstretch myself, and I wasn't that hungry for the more senior role. Because I thought if I do the more senior role, more is going to be demanded and I'm not ready to give that bit extra. So I decided not to take the more senior role. Adele, Marketing manager, PSF UK

Part-time was therefore regarded as a 'holding pattern', after which the part-timer would have to return to full-time work in order to return to an upwards career trajectory.

I am looking for a promotion now, which is part of the reason why I'm looking to go back full-time, because that would give me a better chance to get promoted, I feel. [] If it was between me and another candidate, and we were equally good, and the other candidate was full-time, it would automatically go to that person, I guarantee. Florence, Business development manager, InfoCo UK

The discourse of personal career choices enabled organizations to reconcile the shortage of senior part-timers with their policy of encouraging flexible working. Fundamentally, the organization was assumed to have fulfilled its responsibilities by offering individuals the 'choice' between either pausing their

career, or taking on a lot of extra-role tasks in order to compete with full-timers for promotion.

5.3.3 Challenging the neutrality of working practices

It was rare to find anyone contradicting the discourse of part-time as a personal choice issue, but a few participants recognized that the norms at PSF and InfoCo directly disadvantaged part-timers, and limited their choices. Individual part-timers didn't have the power to change the cultural and structural barriers facing them.

Jeroen, the only full-timer in this study, had postponed the transition to part-time because he wasn't prepared to be paid less for delivering full-time-equivalent outputs. He challenged the assumption that an individual part-timer could construct a feasible part-time job without support from the corporate centre.

I think companies should build a structure to invest in these type of working models. [] In corporates, that's not good enough, if it's not widely supported, and clearly outspoken also by senior management, as an option. [] It needs to be supported, driven. Jeroen, Project manager, InfoCo Netherlands

The idea that InfoCo was 'not good enough' at supporting part-timers placed some responsibility for part-time with the organization rather than the individual.

Organizational responsibility for working hours culture

The organization's working practices were assumed to be neutral towards both part-time and full-time workers. In terms of organizational culture, however, individual managers were recognized as playing a crucial role in supporting part-timers and making them feel 'normal'. As mentioned above, PSF encouraged appropriate language and behaviour around part-time work through manager training and specific schemes to encourage part-time; managers were

expected to squash ‘joke’ negative comments about working hours, and defend part-timers’ work-life boundaries.

My manager is very supportive of it nowadays and he says, Well it is what it is and you don’t work on Friday. [] So he doesn’t put up with any debate with managers who may comment on it. He says, If you want them [the part-timer] you plan it on another day. So he’s very clear about it as well and that helps. Roos, HR Project manager, InfoCo Netherlands

Colleagues could also set the tone. Many colleagues, especially at PSF, were respectful of time off, and by implication of the part-timer’s non-work roles, contacting the part-timer only in an emergency, and apologizing for interrupting their personal time.

People have tried to respect it [time off], and if they’re calling and it’s not prearranged, they’ll normally apologise for disturbing me. Alistair, Director, Tax, PSF UK

Organizational responsibility for designing the PTWA

Organizational investment in fixed-volume activities

Most participants expected to bear the cost of fixed-volume activities themselves: they hadn’t considered the possibility that this might be an organizational-level investment in long-term talent retention. However, one participant hinted that some of her managers, in her long career as a part-timer, had perceived fixed-volume activities as an investment, perhaps because she had a particular specialist role.

It’s very important to make many billing hours. On the other hand you also have to be part of all kind of meetings and you can’t be in half a meeting. And to keep up with everything that happens on the tax front you have to read a lot, you cannot do that half time either. So you end up, of course, spending relatively more time on these kind of things, and that was sometimes a problem. [] It did come up regularly, but it always

resulted in the fact that they also saw it as an investment because, of course, you had to keep up your knowledge and they knew that takes time. Simone, Senior manager, Tax, PSF Netherlands

Involving colleagues in work redesign

There was almost no sense in which part-timers held the organization responsible for designing the PTWA or ensuring supportive working practices: the most they might expect was some 'help' from their line manager. Although the discourse remained one of individual responsibility for developing the PTWA, with no sense of a warrant for work redesign at a team level, some part-timers had found a way of reallocating tasks and relationships to reduce their own workload (see section 4.5.4): the discourse was one of mutual benefit. One way of doing this was by characterizing delegation as a development opportunity for subordinates.

At the more senior level you do have client contacts and technical specialisms, [] so they [subordinates] get the expertise and the knowledge and the experience, and we are meant to be leveraging and using the team and training them, [] I think it's particularly evident the higher up you get. You're there to be to helping train the team and, and not to do work that, that somebody else in the team can do. So you're meant to be delegating it effectively, but also training because, people need to be given the opportunity to have hands-on experience. Alistair, Director, Tax, PSF UK

Another discourse was that of 'fair trade' with peers, whereby workload was shared according to capacity, again in a mutually beneficial way.

You know, if you get into a very extreme case, whether you're full-time or you're part-time you can put your hand up and say, Right, I need a bit of help delivering this one. [] I'm working with a friend at the moment who needed help on one or two things to deliver them, so I'm now stepping in on those because I've got the capacity. Alistair, Director, Tax, PSF UK

Working-hours-neutral promotion and career development practices

One participant suggested that assessing skills, knowledge and potential, rather than the volume of extra-role activities, would help create a more level playing field for part-timers.

They measure more by output, and by deliverables, that is in the last couple of years a lot stronger in InfoCo, the metrics that you need to meet, [] and that limits you sometimes a bit. [] In an ideal world, I think you should mix the two, both outputs and what knowledge and skillset are required. Jeroen, Project manager, InfoCo Netherlands

There was also a hint of a fairer alternative to competitive individual ratings. One participant suggested that competitive individual targets, with no sharing of work, and team members in competition with each other for promotion, made it harder for part-timers to compete. Shared team goals, on the other hand, enabled everyone in the team to grow and develop, with each team member contributing to the team target, rather than working in competition with each other for promotion.

I am very happy, and I think lucky with the people working here. [] They have this bigger goal; if it goes well with the group it goes well with everybody. And if it's only going well for one in the group, and the rest it's not, that's not how it should be. Because, in the end, we all want to grow, personally but also within the organisation. [] If I can compare it with my first job, within this international law firm, [] they just didn't want to give work to me [] because if you make hours, a lot of chargeable hours, you get a bonus for it. So that's also a reason for not delegating work to other people. Trudy, Senior manager, Tax, PSF Netherlands

Part-time as an exchange of outputs for money

A surprisingly rare approach to PTWAs was to categorize them as similar to a full-time employment arrangement – a market or economic transaction, involving the exchange of effort for pay, and the delivery of outputs at a mutually

convenient time. Tjarko used this discourse to justify taking time off in lieu, after working during his time off.

I mean in the end I do a value exchange with InfoCo. They give me money and I work, and we agreed on the hours that we work and so... I feel it's fair to be able to shift your... well to shift your 'not working' [your time off] to a later stage. Tjarko, Internal consultant, InfoCo Netherlands

5.3.4 Summary of section

The dominant discourse represented part-time work in the language of personal lifestyle choice. The individual had made a personal choice of working hours, so the organization was not responsible for making that choice successful: the organization's working practices and norms were perceived to be working-hours-neutral. At InfoCo, organizational responsibility ended with having a policy which offered employees a 'choice' of working hours. PSF had begun a process of counteracting the dominant culture of long hours and constant availability, but this was still a work in progress, and many of the participants had made the transition to part-time before the culture change initiatives.

The responsibility for designing a feasible part-time job was perceived to be personal so individuals might continue to deliver FTE workload and make themselves available during their time off. Moreover, the individual regarded it as their own responsibility to 'compensate' for the 'fixed-volume' activities which would otherwise make part-time too expensive for the organization. Only a few participants had redefined part-time as a team or organizational (not personal) issue, which involved resourcing the team rather than 'accommodating' lifestyle choices. This alternative discourse was the foundation for the team-based job crafting practices described in chapter 4.

The dominant discourse of choice also meant that part-timers were assumed to have chosen to step back from their careers. Both organizations operated performance management and career development structures which meant that part-timers could not compete on equal terms with full-timers, but these

practices were nonetheless regarded as working-hours-neutral. Minority challenges to the dominant discourse envisaged a larger role for the organization in redesigning promotion and career development practices to avoid disadvantaging part-timers.

The discourse of personal choice and organizational neutrality meant that organizations could, without apparent inconsistency, encourage part-time work as part of their talent retention strategy, while simultaneously retaining working practices, job designs and career structures which rendered part-time extremely difficult. The individual part-timers were encouraged to believe that part-time was possible, but the taken-for-granted assumptions of the organizational culture of both PSF and InfoCo placed a huge burden on individuals. The discourses are summarized in table 15 below.

Dominant discourse: part-time as a personal lifestyle choice	Opposing discourse: challenging the neutrality of working practices
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working hours are a personal choice and responsibility • Designing a PT job is a personal choice and responsibility: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • avoiding impact on colleagues and clients through FTE workload and ‘two-way flexibility’ • avoiding impact on the organization by compensating for the cost of fixed-volume activities • Career progression is a personal choice and responsibility 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organizational responsibility for facilitating different working hours ‘choices’ • Organizational responsibility for designing the PTWA: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • investment in fixed-volume activities • involving colleagues in work redesign • Organizational responsibility for designing working-hours-neutral promotion and career development practices: promotion based on skills and potential, and contribution to team goals, rather than volume of extra-role activities compared with colleagues • Part-time as an exchange of outputs for money

Table 15 Summary of discourse of personal choice and working-hours-neutrality

5.4 Discourse 3. Categorizing part-timers – stigmatized ‘others’ or the ‘new normal’?

5.4.1 Section introduction

The third and final set of discourses concerned whether part-timers could be professional workers, categorized as ‘normal’ or at least ‘new normal’ workers alongside full-timers; or whether they were stigmatized as ‘other’, less than professional because of the non-work role which competed for time and energy with their work role. The discourse of being ‘other’ was the foundation for many of the concerns about ‘coming out’ as a part-timer described in sections 4.3.5 and 4.5.3.

In this section I elaborate on the four different sub-discourses which contributed to part-timers feeling ‘other’, and therefore trying to maintain their professional status by working during their time off, delivering 100% outputs for 80% pay, and even by hiding their part-time status. These four sub-discourses were: failing to prioritize work over non-work roles; failing to identify with the organization’s commercial values; failing to prioritize money over time; and failing to make themselves available during ‘normal’ working hours (a failure of professionalism). I then describe the sub-discourses of part-timers as the ‘new normal’: conceptualizing all workers as part-timers; and part-timers as authentic and mature decision-makers.

5.4.2 Part-timers as ‘other’: grateful, lucky and keen to return the favour

Most part-timers felt grateful and lucky to be ‘accommodated’ or ‘allowed’ to work part-time; they had been granted a *favour* by the organization, a perk which was bestowed cautiously, even reluctantly, to some part-timers in all four research sites.

I’ve kept quite a good, responsible role even though being part-time. So many of my friends [] now do something that is not what they’re capable

of doing. I've been quite lucky in that I still have kept what I would say is quite a good job. Christine, Assistant director, Corporate finance, PSF UK

Even when there was a national law enabling part-time, the favour was perceived to be personal, so the individual felt grateful.

I'm very, very grateful that the manager who hired me, for him, it was no, you know, there was no obstacle at all. And I'm very happy that he gave me that chance to try it out, and sometimes you need a little encouragement. Clara, Operations manager, InfoCo Netherlands

The same gratitude was evidenced even when an organizational policy encouraged part-time work, as at PSF.

You have decided that you don't want to work full time and they've considered it, because they don't have an obligation to provide you with the part-time working. [] I feel very lucky I've been given this flexibility. [] The firm has put great trust in me and respects the way I've been able to manage it. They've had their pound of flesh and I'm sure they will continue to. But that's the way it works; that's business. Caitlin, Executive director, Assurance, PSF UK

As was shown in discourse 2 (section 5.3.2), working during one's time off ('two-way flexibility') might be constructed as avoiding impact on colleagues, but here it was also constructed as returning to the organization the 'favour' done in granting a PTWA.

There's got to be flexibility both ways to gain the respect from those around you and you've got to respect the fact that... It [part-time]'s not a privilege, but you have been given something by your employer that they don't have to do, [] and you've got to respect it, not abuse it. Caitlin, Executive director, Assurance, PSF UK

The rest of this section explores the four sub-discourses which contributed to part-timers feeling 'other'.

‘Other’ because they don’t prioritize ‘worthy’ work over non-work

In a culture which expected the prioritization of work over non-work roles, full-timers didn’t expect predictable working hours or predictable time off. Part-timers contradicted organizational and professional expectations of constant availability and the absence of non-work commitments. Part-time in this culture was the opposite of professional: it was personal.

I don’t think it [the problem]’s really part-time, I think it’s more people respecting that you have commitments outside work. [] It’s the fact that you’ve got to be somewhere else, [] or things have changed at the eleventh hour where you’ve had to make arrangements. [] But I don’t think that’s part-time, I actually think that’s probably respecting that people have commitments outside of work they need to manage. Caitlin, Executive director, Assurance, PSF UK

Full-time was understood as a non-temporal norm, such that, even without working the ‘full’ 168 hours in every week, full-timers established a sense of commitment and priority given to work, while part-time was understood as a partial affective commitment to work, as well as a partial commitment of time. In the UK in particular, the stigma of otherness was partly a sense that other life activities couldn’t be as worthwhile as paid work, and therefore needed to be justified. Patsy was clear that there was not just an organizational pressure, but a societal pressure to prioritize work as a more worthwhile activity than non-work.

I think there is to some extent a stigma attached. I find myself almost justifying working part-time sometimes, and having to actually say to people, and this isn’t inside InfoCo, this is outside as well, if it’s coming from the angle of, kind of suggesting that you don’t work very hard, then I do use the, Well, I work five days a week in four, because people think, Oh, you’ve got all this time on your hands then, what are you doing? Patsy, Inclusion and diversity project manager, InfoCo UK

Although both organizations officially stated that the achievement of a PTWA should not be dependent upon having a 'good' reason, in practice the reason mattered at a local level, particularly when absence had to be justified. Definitions of 'good' reasons and 'bad' reasons varied with the personal opinions of colleagues and managers: those who didn't have a reason which was generally accepted as worthy, such as a caring role or voluntary work, might find the stigma difficult to interpret. One of the part-timers without a 'worthy' reason for working part-time said that she had resolved the identity tensions in the transition from 'tax adviser' to 'slacker', but this is a decision she has had to defend, and her choice of language ('slacker') suggests a morally inferior choice.

Once upon a time maybe if someone said, What do you do, I'd have said I'm a tax adviser. Technically now, the majority of my time I do not spend in the office, so what do you say then? Generally speaking: Crazy, slacker. Slacker is a popular one. [] I go to the theatre, I go to the cinema, I see my mates. I do nothing useful with it whatsoever, it's great. It's fabulous. Yeah, I always said I was going to do something worthwhile with it and I totally don't. Carrie, Assistant director, Transaction tax, PSF UK

The most common reason for working part-time in this sample was motherhood. While this was an acceptable (worthy) reason in all contexts, motherhood was regarded as all-encompassing life role, so part-time working mothers risked a much deeper alienation from their professional identity: colleagues might assume that the motherhood identity would become primary, so instead of being a professional *and* a mother, you became, as Anneke put it, 'a mum that also wants to work'.

I should just say, I can't make it. It doesn't matter why I can't make it, I just can't make it. [] But kind of saying afterwards, Because I have to look after the kids, it's like, Oh you know, I'm a mum that also wants to work. Anneke, Marketing manager, InfoCo Netherlands

When motherhood became the dominant identity attributed to a part-time working mother, colleagues might assume that, if they weren't available, they were at home with kids, even when they were actually in a meeting. This discourse was heard in both the UK and the Netherlands: despite the higher prevalence of part-time work in the Netherlands, it was still closely associated with motherhood.

If you rang a bloke up, Oh you're busy, you're in a meeting, that's fine. But if you rang me up it'd be, Oh, obviously it's your day off today because I can't get hold of you. And it's like, No, I'm actually in a meeting. [] Maybe I've read too much into these incidents, but for me [] the implication is, Oh you're with your children, that's really annoying. [] You'd never ring up and leave that message for one of my male colleagues. Florence, Business development manager, InfoCo UK

Furthermore, %FTE was important in defining the identity shift for working mothers: a 60% working arrangement implied a stronger connection with motherhood and being a secondary earner, and therefore a much bigger identity shift than an 80% arrangement. Only six participants in this study had 60% or three-day PTWAs, and four of those were mothers who not only had young children but also had husbands with demanding long-hours jobs. The transition from five to three days, when contemporaneous with the transition to the 'one and a half' family model, was tied up with a major identity shift, so the part-timer might 'feel' more part-time.

It felt more part time at three days than it does at four days. I don't feel like, really I'm a part timer, I just feel like I'm fortunate not to have to come into the office on a Monday. But at three days you felt it more, you felt, I am a part timer, especially because for me it was when I'd just had the baby, there was a lot of change in how I felt and who I was, so yes it was more evident then, I was labelled as a part-timer. I'm not really labelled as a part timer, I haven't been since I went up to four days a week. Adele, Marketing manager, PSF UK

Some working mothers felt it necessary to suppress any acknowledgement of their non-work lives. They felt that they had to maintain a front, to avoid any impact of the personal on the professional, for fear of losing professional identity: if they could not sustain this façade, they might eventually leave the organization.

Then women come in to work [after maternity leave] and say, Everything's fine, yep definitely I can take that on, yep definitely it's no problem for me to come in at seven o'clock tomorrow. [] The boss is saying, [] Does that present a problem, shall I get someone else to do it? And the women say, No, no, no, that's not a problem at all, yes absolutely I can do that. [] Then they find themselves in a job that they cannot do. [] I think that people just don't tell people the truth and we sadly every year lose people who just feel like they can't accommodate the role. [] They don't engage and they don't talk about it. Veronica, Senior manager, Tax, PSF UK

'Other' because they disregard the commercial imperative to work as much as possible

The culture of both organizations meant that part-timers, just like full-timers, were under immense pressure to work long hours, and thereby maximize commercial success in a competitive marketplace. It was assumed that the intention of any commercial organization was naturally to encourage employees to work as many hours as possible in a competitive market, using whatever inducements they could find – salary, promotion or benefits.

InfoCo put all of those things in place, [] any sort of perk you can think of, pensions, private health cover, dental cover, fuel cards, anything you can think of that takes the pressure off you a little bit and puts it onto InfoCo, they've put in place. To the point where you know, maybe it's over the top. The counter side to that is they buy employee trust or... not trust, devotion. Alan, IT project manager, InfoCo UK

Intense competition in a global marketplace meant that overselling became the norm. Both InfoCo and PSF oversold projects, setting up high expectations of the service they would provide to clients, and requiring intense effort from their employees to reach targets.

When InfoCo sell the contracts and the services, they always oversell our role. So for instance, we [I and my jobshare partner] are 1.2 FT equivalent, we do 0.6 each, but I think we're sold to the customer as 1.5 so that InfoCo get more. It always works like that, they always oversell you because they want more, you know, more from you. Natasha, Operations manager, InfoCo UK

Meeting impossible targets then became an issue of professional pride and identification with commercial organizational values: delivering high standards and meeting valuable organizational goals required working long hours and working during their time off; pace, challenge and busy-ness were part of both commercialism and personal development. This way of working became part of one's occupational identity.

I think all of us in, in the profession, [] always have moved the dial on sort of the side of having too much to do. Because I think that keeps us, you know, fast and moving and delivering our targets and meeting our challenges. [] We do generally tend to err on the side of being too busy, because that, that keeps us utilised and running, [] because we want to grow and move forward as a firm or a department. Alistair, Director, Tax, PSF UK

Many part-timers felt the need to demonstrate and articulate their identification with these commercial and professional values, as a means of differentiating themselves from those part-timers who needed to be 'accommodated'. Here, part-time work (non-availability) is constructed as uncommercial. Being available during one's time off is not only constructed as avoiding impact on colleagues (discourse 2, section 5.3.2) and returning the 'favour' done by the organization in 'allowing' part-time (discourse 3, section 5.4.2); being available is also part of being professional, responsible and committed. Margreeth

claimed a professional and organizational identity by contrasting her approach (being contactable during her day off) with another 'type of person', ie those (female) part-timers who 'actually take off that day'.

So it's not like I say, OK, fine I'm putting my phone off now, you're not going to reach me, I'm not that type of person. I don't count the hours. [] I feel that it's my responsibility towards the work as well and if they provide me the opportunity to work flexi hours then I should also be flexi towards them. [] I know I'm very different in that, because I know a lot of women that actually take off that day. Margreeth, Operations manager, PSF Netherlands

'Other' because they don't prioritize money over time

A few participants specifically challenged the prioritization of money over time. Having originally accepted the organizational inducements (money and career progression) as worthwhile compensations for working long hours, they had now changed their minds – or their values. By preferring time to money, they not only challenged the organization's commercial imperative to work as much as possible; they also removed themselves from organizational influence via the rewards of money and career.

This is the job you're doing, it comes with these hours, you've done them for the last four years, it's the status quo to you. So it's like, yes of course the hours are hard and [] the partners have noticed that, and we're giving you a bonus at the end of the year. Which actually they did. I think that might have been the thing, that I got the bonus and [my counsellor] said, You don't seem overly happy about that. And I'm like, Yeah, but it's just money isn't it? I'm not that impressed with that. Carrie, Assistant director, Transaction tax, PSF UK

This group was moving away from devoting as much time as possible to career and increasing their earning power, which could also be quite a profound,

values-based challenge not just to the organization's commercial values, but to western consumer values.

Lots of people are still in the 'more and more and more' mode, they think you cannot earn less but you have to earn more. You have to change the switch in that respect. [] The fact that they're getting less salary, that cannot be, you know? Yeah, but look what you have, are you not satisfied with what you have? Yes, but...! Yeah, OK, so it will be a less expensive car and you'll [make] do with your stuff a few years longer, it's still fine. Why do you have to buy the newest thing? So it's mindset in that respect as well. Jan, Senior manager, Assurance, PSF Netherlands

'Other' because they're not available during 'normal' working hours

The labels full-time and part-time did not adequately articulate the difference between responsibility and availability. Managers and professionals were *responsible* for their job tasks 168 hours per week but *availability* was also subsumed into the concept of 'being a professional': while part-timers spoke mostly of the difficulty of not being available during normal working hours, they were also contravening the open-ended commitment to work implied by the label full-time (see section 5.2.2). In order to remain professional, part-timers had to make themselves available: even when delivering on all one's targets, the perception was that it was unprofessional to refuse work during 'normal' working hours, so a 'good' reason was needed.

Part-timers had to be careful to be seen to be working, and delivering. Availability was commonly confused with performance, such that part-timers felt that they might be judged as poor performers if they were not seen to be available during normal working hours. Keith chose part-time rather than full-time flexible working (even while continuing to deliver full-time-equivalent objectives) in order to avoid being perceived as shirking.

When I had the conversation with my boss's boss, [] he said, Why don't you do what you're doing but just, 'typically four days a week' [ie remain

FT but work four days]. I didn't want to do that, because I'm not going to leave myself open to any self-critique or anyone else's critique of getting paid for what you don't deserve. Keith, Internal consultant, InfoCo UK

While occasional, 'leftover' or serendipitous time off during the 'normal' working week was explicitly acceptable in all contexts, only a cut in salary could buy the right to *prioritize* personal activities on a regular basis during 'normal' working hours – and not feel guilty about it. Part-timers spoke of the relief they felt at having the *right* to refuse work on their unpaid, non-work days, even though they might be delivering 100% of a job, or working extra hours on the other four days of the week, and sometimes 'choosing' to do paid work on their days off. This ability to refuse work during 'normal' working hours was what made them retain their part-time salary even though their outputs would merit a full-time salary.

So we're discussing also with colleagues here, Why don't you *work* Friday [ie work and get paid on Friday]? It's really silly because you know, you work in your house [ie work from home on days off]. Being able to say, No, I don't work on Friday, is wonderful. [] It's really worth not having that money and it's worth working overtime in the other four days. [] I think it [part-time]'s the only thing that really allows you to say No on Friday. Anneke, Marketing manager, InfoCo Netherlands

This bargain – delivering full-time-equivalent outputs for part-time pay – was also what allowed part-timers to achieve *uninterrupted* time off for non-work activities which were important and valuable to them – even though this might be the expense of an unreasonable workload on other days of the week.

I have asked myself, is it not better to go back to five days of a working week? Because I get paid 20% less, and I probably still do some of that 20% extra work, so is it still working for me? And then my answer is Yes, because if [] I worked five days a week I could go to my grandmother, who is 99 years old, I could do that with my daughter, and then make up for it another day, but if I make a plan and an appointment with her that I'm going to be there, and then I have an important business call coming

in, I would be asked to take it, whereas now I can safely say, No, Friday isn't my normal working day. [] So if I am with my grandmother, I really want to *be* with her and not be worried about a call coming in. Clara, Operations manager, InfoCo Netherlands

These part-timers were almost redefining the meaning of part-time: instead of part-time meaning working fewer hours for less pay, they were taking less pay in return for the right to prioritize non-work activities over work activities during the 'normal' working week.

5.4.3 Part-timers as the 'new normal'

Part-timers as the 'new normal' was a particularly strong discourse in the Netherlands, where four days a week is not only a right enshrined in law, which legitimized the transition to part-time at a societal level, and reduced the burden of 'personal favour' felt by those in the UK, but is also visible, common and widely accepted. This discourse allowed part-timers to claim an identity position alongside full-timers as professionals.

I just happen to work part time. I don't see my job as any different from a senior manager that works full time. Andre, Senior manager, Tax, PSF Netherlands

Being part-time had become part of who they were: part-time almost amounted to an identity statement.

My week doesn't have a Friday in the work week any more. Arend, Senior manager, Tax, PSF Netherlands

At PSF UK, significant work had been done to counteract the prevailing UK view of part-time as 'difficult', expensive and uncompetitive. This enabled some PSF UK part-timers to characterize part-time as just 'business as usual'.

Four days is actually, it's a bit like five days isn't it? [] It doesn't feel like, Oh, I'm a part-timer. It feels like I'm here to do my job and I do it and

that's accepted and that's fine. [] It's not really a thing, I suppose, it's just that I don't work Mondays, [] in my head it's not really a thing that I work part time. Adele, Marketing manager, PSF UK

However, even in the part-time-friendly Netherlands only 'long' part-time, ie 80% or more, was 'normal'. An 80% part-time arrangement often involved delivering the same outputs as a full-timer, and being available during one's time off (see section 4.4.4), so it was categorized alongside full-time, in opposition to arrangements of 60% or less.

When you go for three days or you do job share, [] then you are really in the category of part-time. But four days a week, that's normal in the Netherlands, even in management positions. Clara, Operations manager, InfoCo Netherlands

Apart from the sheer weight of numbers – the critical mass of part-timers achieved in some contexts – challenges to the discourse of part-timers as 'other' (and lesser) came from conceptualizing all workers as part-timers, and from the assertion that those with significant non-work roles might bring an extra dimension to their work, a dimension not available to full-timers.

Conceptualizing all workers as part-timers

Within the framework of a global, always-on working environment, there was a common-sense understanding that nobody could work all 168 hours in the week. The recognition that 'we're all part-timers' was a liberating mindset, which placed full-timers and part-timers in the same category as being available for only a proportion of the 168 hours, rather than separating 'full-time' professionals working 60 hours a week from part-time 'others' working 40 hours a week. Part-time and full-time become fairly meaningless categories in a 24/7 world, relating to disappearing norms.

I find it [part-time] a very unhelpful term, actually, because I don't know anyone who doesn't work part-time. I mean to say, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year, [] so we all work part-time, it's a

convenience term that relates to a norm. Keith, Internal consultant, InfoCo UK

Part-timers' authenticity, perspective and judgement

Rather than the professional and the personal being in opposition to each other, the discourse of the new normal allowed part-timers to be themselves, to be authentic, complete human beings as well as professionals. Part-timers used words like 'empowered' and 'true to yourself' to describe their integrated identities encompassing both a professional role and a non-work role. Part-time work hadn't diminished their professionalism, but had enhanced their authenticity.

I feel more empowered in a way. [] I feel like I'm really driving something for me, that works for me and the company and my kids at home, so maybe that makes me feel like it's not just about, I don't know, work and the weekends. There's a bit more to it than that, [] more to my life. I think there are things I get from being at home with my kids and the energy that I bring back to work and vice versa that maybe wouldn't be quite the same if it was just the weekends. Roisin, Business development director, PSF UK

An extension of this discourse held that working part-time, and having a personal hinterland, brought maturity and perspective in judgement and decision-making.

I felt that having worked part-time and having had the children had kind of given me a maturity and a perspective that some people that had [] not had to consider conflicting priorities and so on didn't have. Veronica, Senior manager, Tax, PSF UK

In this discourse, the zero sum game is the ideal worker's total devotion to work. Long-hours workers have less of a 'whole self' to bring to work, although they can perform more actions than part-timers because they work more hours. Part-timers, on the other hand, can give more of themselves because their non-

work life has allowed more growth and personal development. By this logic, you can give more to your work if you have more of a (personal) life, but if you devote all your time to work, you lose your 'self'.

You better be clear and do the things you do, do that right. Instead of doing, try to do everything but then you're losing your self. [] You can work 24 hours, 7 days in our firm if you want to, but you really will be overworked then. Melanie, Senior manager, Assurance, PSF Netherlands

5.4.4 Summary of section

Two contrasting discourses of the meaning of part-time were presented in this section: stigmatized, and the 'new normal'. More common was the discourse of part-timers as 'other' because they contradicted the dominant culture, which valued (always) putting work before non-work; identifying with the commercial imperative to work more in order to compete; prioritizing money over time; and being available during 'normal' working hours.

The opposing discourse was that part-time work is part of the 'new normal', such that professional identities can be combined with non-work identities without detriment to either. Individuals in both countries described a sense of authenticity from having both a significant work role and a significant non-work role in their lives, and a few also claimed a positive impact on work from the maturity and judgement they developed in their combination of life roles. The 'new normal' discourse was more prevalent among Dutch than UK part-timers, and more prevalent in PSF than in InfoCo, but this was by no means universal: the local team or departmental environment varied within each organization, and so did the personal opinions of colleagues and managers. Part-time might also be normalized by conceptualizing all workers as part-timers, since nobody could be available for 168 hours in every week. Discourses are summarized in table 16 below.

Dominant discourse: categorizing part-timers as ‘other’ – grateful, lucky and keen to return the favour	Opposing discourse: categorizing part-timers as the ‘new normal’
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘Other’ because they don’t always prioritize work over non-work roles • ‘Other’ because they fail to identify with the commercial imperative to work as much as possible • ‘Other’ because they don’t prioritize money over time • ‘Other’ because they’re not available during ‘normal’ business hours 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conceptualizing all workers as part-timers • Authenticity, perspective and judgement

Table 16 Summary of discourses categorizing part-timers as ‘other’ or the ‘new normal’

5.5 Chapter summary

Chapter 5 has presented an analysis of three discourses which influence the development of a PTWA.

The first set of discourses concerned the nature of managerial and professional work. Some kinds of managerial and professional job, particularly fast-paced and unpredictable client-facing work and team management, were often regarded as unsuitable for part-time; these ‘difficult’ characteristics were perceived as part of the ‘nature’ of the work, which denied any possibility of change. This discourse of the fixed ‘nature’ of managerial and professional work underpinned the framework within which the process began: part-timers who could not fulfil the criteria of constant availability and long hours had to be ‘accommodated’ as an (inconvenient) exception to the norm. The challenges to the majority discourse were: first, suggesting that immediate responses and constant availability to unpredictable demands were culturally constructed practices; secondly, instigating different working practices which would increase

predictability (to allow predictable time off) and substitutability (so that colleagues could cover gaps in availability), and improve knowledge management (so that part-timers could keep up with progress during their absences); and thirdly highlighting that clients and colleagues have to deal with delays and slow responses even from full-timers.

The second set of discourses related to the allocation of responsibility for choosing and then implementing feasible PTWAs. The dominant discourse represented part-time work in the language of personal lifestyle choice, such that the responsibility for designing a feasible part-time job was perceived to be personal, rather than organizational. This discourse implied that part-time jobs had to be designed by the individual, without impact on colleagues, so the part-timer might have to deliver FTE workload and make themselves available during their time off. Moreover, the individual often regarded it as their own responsibility to 'compensate' the organization for the 'fixed-volume' activities which would otherwise make part-time too expensive for the organization. Career progression was also regarded as a personal issue: organizational working practices, and career development practices, were assumed to be working-hours-neutral, and the individual was assumed to have 'chosen' to step back from their career.

The opposing discourse represented part-time as an organizational issue: PSF took some responsibility for changing the organizational culture (but not working practices or career structures). A few participants accessed a discourse of part-time as a team resourcing issue, so that they could lose 20% of the work without either offloading it unfairly on colleagues or continuing to deliver 100% outputs themselves. This alternative discourse was the foundation for the team-based adaptation practices described in chapter 4. The discourse of choice, and the assumption that working practices and career structures were working-hours-neutral, meant that organizations could, without apparent inconsistency, encourage part-time work as part of their talent retention strategy, while simultaneously retaining working practices, job designs and career structures which rendered part-time extremely difficult. The individual part-timers were

encouraged to believe that part-time was possible, but the taken-for-granted assumptions in the organizational practices placed a huge burden on individuals.

The third set of discourses concerned whether part-timers were regarded as the 'new normal' or stigmatized as 'others'. In both organizations, some part-timers were 'accommodated' as a favour, and part-timers described themselves as 'lucky' and 'grateful' to be offered the privilege of part-time. Part-timers contradicted the norms of always putting work before non-work; identifying with the organization's commercial values; prioritizing money over time; and being available for the entirety of the 'normal' working week (which was part of being professional). The opposing discourse was that part-timers are the 'new normal', such that professional identities can be combined with non-work identities without detriment to either. Conceptualizing all workers as part-timers in a 24/7 global economy helped to break down distinctions between full-timers and part-timers. Furthermore, individuals in both countries described a sense of authenticity from having both a significant work role and a significant non-work role in their lives, and some also claimed positive impact on work from the maturity and judgement they developed in their combination of life roles. Where work and non-work roles were regarded as a zero sum game, only ideal workers could be professionals, but the alternative discourse suggested that part-timers may outperform full-timers because of their authenticity, perspective and judgement.

6 DISCUSSION

6.1 Chapter introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss my findings on the emergence and development of a part-time working arrangement in the context of the existing literature, but first I will summarize those findings.

The research was designed to identify a process, defined as ‘a difference in form, quality or state over time in an organizational entity’ (Van de Ven, 2007). The entity was the part-time working arrangement, and the aim was to explore the nature and sequence of events in its development, generalizing first to a narrative history rather than a set of variables. The main research question was:

- How and why does a part-time working arrangement (PTWA) for managers and professionals emerge and develop?

Sub-questions addressed how a PTWA is defined; the start point, stages and end point of the process; and the impact of the context within which the PTWA emerged and developed.

The study found that although a PTWA was formally negotiated between the individual and their line manager, much of the design of the arrangement happened after the formal negotiation, as an ongoing crafting process, led proactively by the individual crafter but also involving colleagues and clients. A four-stage process was identified, with each stage isolating events in the process, in order to clarify and simplify (Langley, 1999) although in practice the development is less structured. In the first stage, the individual evaluated the possibility of part-time work in a particular job, within the constraints of the context; secondly, the individual prepared their case for part-time work, gathering best-practice information and building up the necessary ‘credit’ (and sometimes resources) before making a request; thirdly, the individual and the line manager (or hiring manager) negotiated the PTWA, although this negotiation often omitted some key aspects of how the PTWA would work; and

finally, the individual filled in these gaps by adapting the PTWA over time, shifting both the schedule of availability and the workload and responsibilities, to suit the needs of the organization, their clients and colleagues, as well as themselves. Each of these stages involved a degree of identity work, constructing a coherent professional identity out of the conflicting (sometimes even mutually exclusive) concepts of 'part-time' and 'professional'. In this research, the start and end points of the process were defined in relation to a particular person and a particular job; thus any one individual might go through several processes in different jobs.

The definition of what constituted a PTWA varied considerably within the sample. Two dimensions of the arrangement were usually overt: whether the job, or part of it, was suitable for execution on a part-time basis; and the 'normal' schedule of availability, which formed the basis for the percentage reduction in pay. The third element, rather less commonly discussed, was the scope of responsibility of the job, and whether this varied from the expectations placed on a full-timer. The fourth and usually unspoken part of the arrangement was the implication for work identity of the transition to part-time: implicit in many transitions was the idea that part-time signifies a loss of professionalism and career potential.

Three sets of discourses were found to be particularly important in understanding the context for both the events in the process, and the individual's identity work at each stage of the process. These discourses begin to enable generalization about how and why the process develops over time. The three discourses were: first, whether or not the 'nature' of managerial and professional work made some jobs 'unsuitable' for part-time; secondly, whether part-time was regarded as a personal lifestyle choice, or an organizational issue (and as a consequence of this, whether responsibility for part-time job design and part-timers' career progression lay with the individual alone, or with the organization in part); and thirdly, whether part-timers were stigmatized as 'other' because of their non-work roles, or accepted as the 'new normal'. Stating the discourses as opposites has also highlighted the dialectical process of

development of the PTWA, with individual part-timers often perceived to be in conflict with the cultural norms of the organization, and in some cases in conflict with the needs of their full-time colleagues and clients.

The findings of this research speak to the recent but growing literature on part-time managers and professionals, and the difficulty of developing 'quality' part-time jobs. While other studies have taken a life-course (Tomlinson, 2006) or longitudinal (Lee and Kossek, 2005; Hall et al., 2012) approach to the study of part-timers' career development over time, I believe this study is the first to take a process approach to the development of the arrangement itself. I have therefore structured the discussion to reflect the process revealed by my study, and referred to relevant existing literature within that framework.

6.2 The part-time working arrangement as a situated process of negotiated job design over time

6.2.1 Introduction

My aim in taking a process approach (Van de Ven, 2007) was to investigate the dynamics of how and why a functioning PTWA might arise, so I looked for theories which might help to frame the data. Three connected theoretical frameworks had the most explanatory power: i-deals, job crafting, and provisional identity construction during work role transitions. These are summarized in figure 5.

Idiosyncratic employment deals, or i-deals, describe a type of employment arrangement, and are defined by Rousseau, Ho and Greenberg (2006, p.978) as 'voluntary, personalized agreements of a nonstandard nature negotiated between individual employees and their employers regarding terms that benefit each party.' The two commonest types of i-deal concern flexible working hours

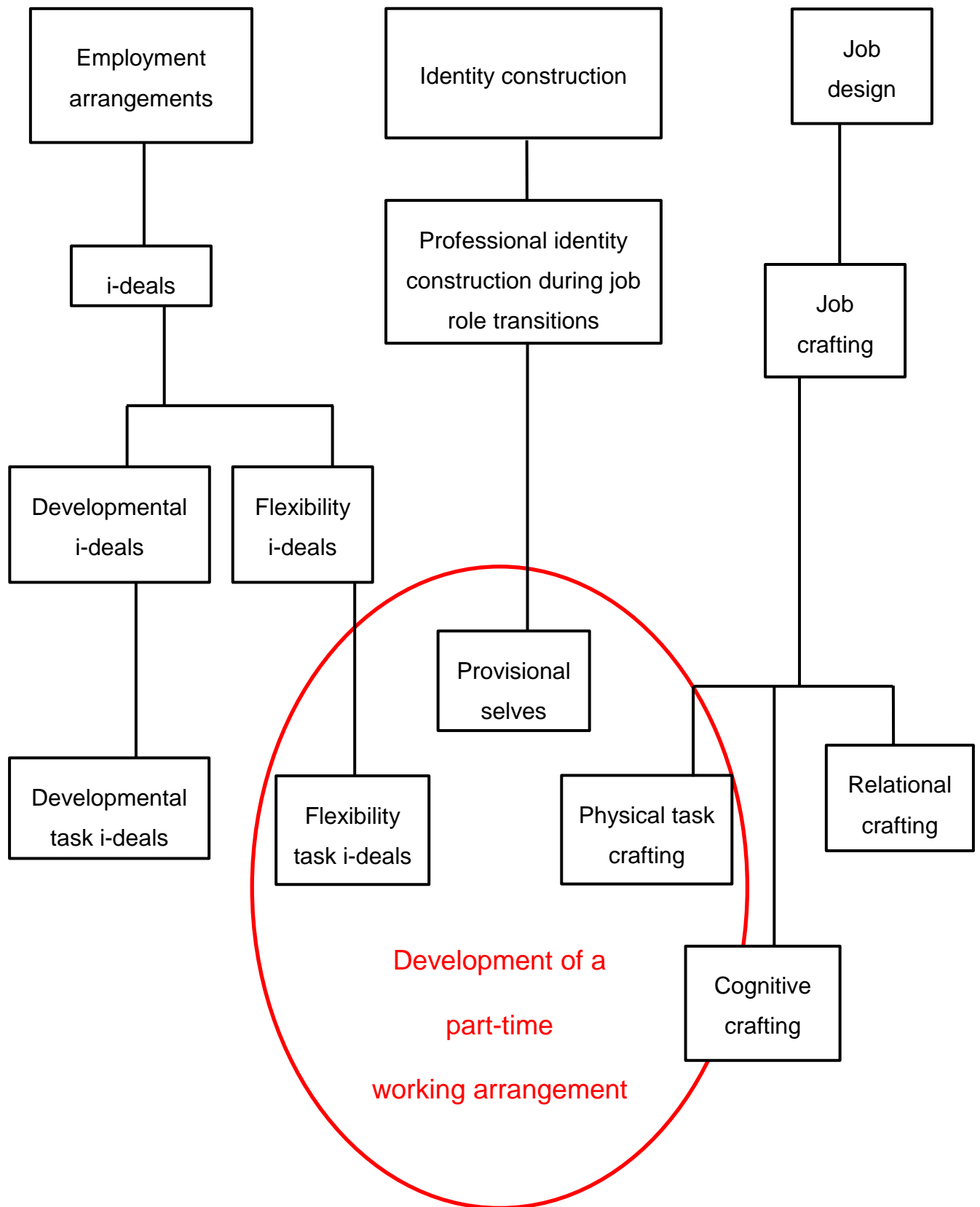


Figure 5 Three theories relevant to the development of a PTWA

and individualized development opportunities (Rousseau, 2005): PTWAs fall into the former category.

However, a PTWA is more than an employment contract: it also involves the design or redesign of a job. The field of part-time managers and professionals lacks a theory of part-time job design or development. In the field of job design more generally, there has been a trend away from top-down theories and towards bottom-up individual-level theories such as job crafting, which focus more on the job-holder's proactive and goal-oriented search for meaning and control in their work, rather than on the manager's ability to create jobs which engage workers in general (Grant and Parker, 2009; Oldham and Hackman, 2010). Job crafting is a type of bottom-up job design which involves 'the physical and cognitive changes individuals make in the task or relational boundaries of their work' (Wrzesniewski and Dutton, 2001, p.179). Job crafting is a behaviour which affects both the meaning of work (its purpose, and what the individual believes is achieved in the work) and the job-holder's work identity. Unlike i-deals, which are formal contractual arrangements, job crafting takes place informally and is unauthorized by the organization.

The literatures on i-deals and job crafting are connected in the concept of 'task i-deals' (Hornung et al., 2010), a form of individual-employer negotiation which focuses on job content as well as contractual terms and, more broadly, connects the employment relations literature with the job design literature. Hornung et al.'s study (2010) characterized task i-deals as a sub-set of development i-deals, involving the customization of job content in pursuit of career needs and personal development. I suggest that part-time managers and professionals also customize job content, negotiating a type of task i-deal but within the category of flexibility i-deals rather than development i-deals.

The third theoretical framework used in this thesis is the theory of 'provisional selves' which result from professional identity work undertaken during job role transitions (Ibarra, 1999; Ibarra and Barbulescu, 2010). The part-timer's need for time off during the 'normal' working week, particularly when the need is for *predictable* time off (Perlow and Porter, 2009; Perlow, 2012) provides a

substantial challenge to the norms of the protestant work ethic (Williams et al., 2013) and the prioritization of work over non-work practised by the ideal worker (Acker, 1990). The part-timer therefore has to engage in identity work to construct an identity which coherently combines 'part-time' and 'professional'; the outcome will in turn affect the process of development of the arrangement.

The theory of 'provisional selves' (Ibarra, 1999), although well established with reference to other work role transitions (Ibarra and Barbulescu, 2010; Petriglieri, 2011), has not been applied empirically to the transition from full-time to part-time. Work role transitions are defined by Ibarra and Barbulescu (2010, p.136) as 'passages between sequentially held organizational, occupational or professional roles': examples given are 'organizational entries and exits; promotions, transfers, and demotions; inter-organizational moves; and occupational changes'. I suggest that the transition to part-time is another type of work role transition. In some cases the transition to part-time may result in a demotion or downgrading of the job role, but in others the transition may be a less concrete and unarticulated shift in professional or career identity, or a more gradual drift away from high-profile or high-demand projects and activities.

During a work role transition, new skills, behaviours, attitudes and patterns of interaction can trigger fundamental changes in professional identity, causing professionals to experiment with provisional selves. The theory describes a process of observing role models, experimenting with new behaviours or 'provisional selves', and evaluating how those behaviours are perceived. The evaluation may result in either discarding self-presentation tactics (if they are badly received or feel inauthentic) or adopting them more permanently.

The combination of these three different perspectives provides a theoretical underpinning for the process of emergence and development of a PTWA. The rest of this section 6.2 will describe the four-stage process in the context of the three theories and the relevant literature on part-time managers and professionals; section 6.3 goes on to describe the discourses of part-time identified in this research.

6.2.2 The start of the process

Van de Ven (2007) and Langley (1999) emphasize the importance of defining the starting point for any process of theory building. In this research, the evaluation of the possibility of doing a specific job on a part-time basis marks the start of the process of developing a PTWA. Participants' previous history of working part-time in other jobs was treated as one of the influences on the individual's provisional identity (Ibarra, 1999), and therefore part of the inner context within which the current process began. This approach defines the motivations and demographics of the individual part-timer as just one of the antecedents of the arrangement, alongside other relevant contextual factors such as the type of work, the organizational context, or the working practices prevalent in the working culture. While much of the literature on part-timers concentrates on the motivations or work-life balance needs of potential part-timers as drivers of the PTWA (Hakim, 2002; Kossek et al., 2010; Tomlinson, 2006; Hall et al., 2012; Martin and Sinclair, 2007), I have framed my analysis of the development of the arrangement as intimately connected to the individual's identity work (Meiksins and Whalley, 2002; Kuhn, 2006; Dick and Hyde, 2006; Dick, 2006) which happens in the context of the team, organizational and national culture.

Both job crafting and i-deals are theories of proactive, goal-oriented individual behaviour which start with the individual's initiative (see figure 6, section 6.2.8). Job crafting is initiated by the individual in order to fulfil basic human needs for control and meaning, a positive self-image, and connection to others (Wrzesniewski and Dutton, 2001). The job crafting model concentrates on the search for meaning *at work*, but the authors 'hope to suggest a more holistic view of how individuals compose their lives and the meaning of their lives by changing their jobs and themselves within them' (Wrzesniewski and Dutton, 2001, p.194). Extending this line of thought, Sturges (2012) has applied the model to crafting a work-life balance, such that the crafters are seeking meaning in their work-life balance. I suggest that part-time job crafters are seeking meaning by 'putting work in its place' (Meiksins and Whalley, 2002), but

this was not a zero sum game: seeking meaning outside of work did not make work *less* meaningful. Rather, many participants spoke of symbiosis between different dimensions of their lives.

An i-deal is also initiated by the individual, but is characterized as an economic negotiation based on the relative power of the two sides (Rousseau et al., 2006): in the case of a part-time negotiation, the perceived expense to the organization of 'accommodating' a part-timer is balanced against the value of the individual's contribution to the organization. The theory of i-deals is more cognizant of power relations than job crafting, but less concerned with meaning: it seeks to explain what and how, rather than why.

The start of the process of developing a PTWA has traditionally been conceptualized as within the control of the individual (Lee et al., 2000; Dick, 2009; Edwards and Robinson, 2004; Dick, 2004) and therefore unpredictable for the organization, making the request more difficult to accommodate. While this remained largely true in the present study, there were a few examples of part-time being prompted by the organization, or even by an individual manager; and furthermore some part-timers aligned the timing of their transition to part-time, and the consequent reallocation of resources, with the organizational timetable (e.g. the annual budget or performance appraisal). In other cases, the timing of the transition to part-time was outside of the control of both individual and organization, such as in the cases of illness, accident or unplanned pregnancy. In other words, the timing of the transition to part-time was not always 'for' the individual and 'against' the organization.

Furthermore, even when the transition to part-time was initiated by the individual, it was initiated in a pre-existing context of high constraint: managers and professionals in transition to part-time might engage in identity work at a very early stage in the process of transition to a new PTWA, even before they began their i-deal negotiation or job crafting, as they attempted to construct an authentic and coherent identity narrative (Blair-Loy, 2003; Kuhn, 2006; Pratt et al., 2006; Ibarra and Barbulescu, 2010) from the apparently mutually exclusive concepts of 'part-time', which signalled non-availability, career plateau, and

back-office, non-managerial or low-status jobs, and 'professional' or 'manager', which implied the prioritization of work, constant availability, upward progress and development, and responsible, high-status jobs (Sheridan, 2004; Lawrence and Corwin, 2003). The rest of the process of developing the arrangement – the dialectic between the individual and organization – was enclosed within the individual's ongoing attempts to construct this coherent identity.

6.2.3 Evaluation of opportunities in a constrained environment

Job crafting is described as 'a situated activity, in the sense that different contexts enable or disable different levels and forms of crafting' (Wrzesniewski and Dutton, 2001, p.180) but one of the limitations of the job-crafting approach to job design is that it tends to highlight individual agency over contextual limitations (Oldham and Hackman, 2010). Subsequent elaboration of both job crafting (Leana et al., 2009; Berg et al., 2010) and i-deals (Hornung et al., 2010) emphasizes the importance of context. In my study, the development of a PTWA took place within a context of high constraint: the first phase of the process, evaluation, highlights that context not only limits the process, but might prevent it from happening at all.

The PTWA emerged during a dialectical process which happened *between* the individual and their manager, colleagues and clients. At early stages of the process, as prospective part-timers wrestled with the legislative framework, organizational policy, organizational culture or their manager's attitudes, some abandoned or postponed the transition to part-time, or decided to remain full-time. Obviously this was a study of those who had achieved a PTWA of some sort, but the process felt fragile. The individuals in this study did not have the *free* or unconstrained choice to work part-time which is implied by Hakim's preference theory (2002): rather, the findings from the evaluation stage of the process support the extensive literature which highlights constraints on the emergence of quality part-time jobs as a result of the social context (Fagan,

2001; Boheim and Taylor, 2004; McRae, 2003; McDonald et al., 2006; Gash, 2008); the organization (Lee et al., 2000; Lee et al., 2002; Dick, 2009; Dick, 2004); co-workers (Kirby and Krone, 2002); and the line manager (Ryan and Kossek, 2008; Lirio et al., 2008; McDonald and Bradley, 2007; Burnett et al., 2013).

Ibarra (1999, p.765) suggests that a work role transition involves 'a negotiated adaptation by which people strive to improve the fit between themselves and their work environment'. The 'raw materials' perceived to be available for professional identity construction (Pratt et al., 2006) will influence the discarding or adopting of provisional selves, and therefore the possibilities for the development of the PTWA. For example, those who expect to continue to perform the same job role after transition to part-time, and those who believe they will need to restrict themselves to back-office or non-client-facing work, undergo job role transitions which are very different in scale. Similarly, a supportive organizational culture provides a different repertoire of narratives from an unsupportive culture.

The 'arrangement' is enacted in the relationships between the part-timer and their manager, colleagues and clients, and cannot exist independently of the social actors, so that it is highly dependent not just on the pre-existing professional identity of the part-timer (e.g. their organizational commitment, or work orientation, see Dooreward et al., 2004), but also on the surrounding structures and discourses which provide the narrative material for the ongoing construction of their professional identity (Pratt et al., 2006). In all the contexts studied, the transition to part-time presented a significant challenge to the norms of professional identity (Kuhn, 2006; Lawrence and Corwin, 2003; Dick and Hyde, 2006; Nentwich and Hoyer, 2012), which derive from the ideal worker with no domestic commitments (Acker, 1990; Dick and Hyde, 2006; Williams, 2000). Furthermore, since the transition to part-time is often preceded or accompanied by life changes or new life stages (parenthood, serious illness, the onset of a caring role, the approach to retirement), a new part-timer may be simultaneously engaged in considerable *personal* identity work.

The development of a 'provisional self' (Ibarra, 1999) involves first of all the study of role models: part-time professionals and managers, as a relatively recent and rare category of worker, had few role models, especially at senior levels. Potential part-timers casting around for role models might only find part-timers who were delivering 100% outputs for 80% pay, or making themselves available during their time off, or giving up on career ambition, any of which might create dissonance with the life goals of a potential part-timer. In my research, role models were mentioned mostly to comment on their absence, making the path to a PTWA lonely and, again, fragile; one participant found senior part-timers off-putting because they seemed so superhuman and had often sacrificed non-work life. Durbin & Tomlinson (2014) found that approximately half of the part-time women they interviewed had 'negative' female role models, who were off-putting because they behaved as ideal workers, giving little time to family roles.

Wrzesniewski and Dutton (2001, p.183) suggest that motivated employees assess opportunities before starting to job-craft, and describe such opportunities as 'psychologically positive, since they imply autonomy to act (ie a form of control), a sense of possible gain, and some sense of ability or means to act'. The discovery that perceived opportunities to craft a part-time job are after all not so extensive, because of organizational culture, a professional work ethic, or one's manager's and colleagues' attitudes, may therefore be expected to be psychologically negative. It seems likely that the provisional self (Ibarra, 1999) formed at the evaluation stage would have a significant impact on the further development of the PTWA.

6.2.4 Preparation for a part-time task i-deal

The preparation stage of developing a PTWA corresponds to the first stage of the i-deal model, prework (see figure 6). Prework for an i-deal covers relationship-building and information gathering (Rousseau, 2005); in the case of

part-time work, it also involved preparing to 'come out' as a part-timer and, occasionally, resourcing the transition.

Opportunities to negotiate an i-deal are theorized to arise only when the individual makes a highly valued contribution to the organization in exchange for their special treatment; this contribution might arise from the individual's power in the market, their relationship quality, the employer's dependence on their skills, or the employer's sense of obligation to the worker (Rousseau, 2005). All of these attributes were displayed by different participants in this research, supporting i-deal theory as well as previous research which has shown that requests to work part-time are more likely to be granted to those who are highly valued by their employer (Tomlinson, 2004; Tomlinson, 2006). This finding again demonstrates the fragility of the process of developing a PTWA: those without such power or credit may never reach the point of starting a formal negotiation.

In this private-sector study the case for part-time had to be made on an *individual* basis, and on the basis of *business* needs (Tomlinson, 2007; Tomlinson, 2006): even in the Netherlands, where the legal right to part-time was culturally accepted, prospective part-timers felt a moral obligation to present an *individual* business case which 'compensated' the organization for the inconvenience of working part-time. This contrasts with the collective presumption in favour of part-time based on a 'right' to equal opportunity or diversity regardless of the difficulties caused to colleagues or managers, which is more prevalent in public sector organizations (Dick, 2009; Edwards and Robinson, 2001; Edwards and Robinson, 2004). The part-timers in the present study accepted the discourse of personal responsibility for their 'choice' to work part-time and therefore the responsibility for implementing the PTWA (see discourse 2, section 5.3): they prepared their cost-benefit analysis at an individual level.

During the construction of the business case, part-timers might therefore consent not only to their own marginalization or job downgrade (Dick and Hyde, 2006), but also to their own work intensification (Kelliher and Anderson, 2009)

as they settled for behaviours such as delivering 100% outputs for 80% pay, and making themselves available during their time off. An *individual* business case could only be made by accepting such work intensification: alternative ways of dealing with the missing 20-40% of workload, or covering gaps in availability would necessarily involve others.

A very small minority of this sample made attempts to gather or develop the extra resourcing needed to dispose of 20-40% of their job even before they made the request to work part-time, and an even smaller number planned the start of the PTWA to coincide with the organizational calendar (annual budget, re-organization, annual review), thereby overcoming the inconvenience of the uncertain timing of part-time requests mentioned in previous literature (Lee et al., 2000; Dick, 2009; Edwards and Robinson, 2004; Dick, 2004). Those who did so also made some progress towards shifting one of the basic dominant assumptions of part-time work: instead of characterizing part-time as an issue of individual choice and responsibility (discourse 2, section 5.3), they were moving towards the idea of reconciling individual and organizational needs and constructing part-time as an issue of organizational resourcing.

The final element of preparation for a PTWA concerned preparing to 'come out' as a part-timer to one's line manager: the conversation represented an early opportunity to experiment with a provisional self (Ibarra, 1999). This might require courage in admitting the importance of non-work roles, and a degree of self-presentation as the prospective part-timer gauged the likely reaction and worked out how to manage any perception of a loss of professional commitment, reliability or career potential.

6.2.5 Negotiation of a part-time task i-deal

The negotiation stage of developing a PTWA corresponds to the negotiation stage of i-deal development (Rousseau, 2005), which varies according to the content of the negotiation. In a PTWA negotiation, four elements were discussed: suitability of the job for execution on a part-time basis; responsibility

(for outputs); availability (for time periods) and degree of contactability during periods of time off; and finally, a largely unspoken psychological contract around implications for professional and career identity. These four elements might be considered the building blocks of a part-time task i-deal: they required special treatment or negotiation because they contradicted perceptions of the 'nature' of managerial and professional work (discourse 1, section 5.2).

Suitability of the job role – and impact on identity

This study confirmed the assumption reported in other literature (e.g. Dick, 2009; Campbell et al., 2011) that some types of work cannot be done part-time because the 'nature of the work' requires long hours and constant availability. At the negotiation stage, the discourse of the 'nature of the work' was the first and largest question to be addressed by potential part-timers – a finding which speaks to the debate about how to achieve 'quality' part-time work when many part-timers are perceived to have to downgrade on transition to part-time.

Connolly and Gregory (2008), in a study of all types of work across the whole of the UK, found that a quarter of women moving from full-time to part-time had to downgrade their jobs. Downgrades were more likely among higher skill occupations, and less likely where there was already a higher proportion of part-timers in the occupation. Given the efforts made by PSF, and the part-time-friendly culture in the Netherlands, one might have expected a lower proportion of downgrades in the current sample. While it is true that the percentage of straightforward ejections from previous jobs in the present study (5 out of 39) was lower, another 5 people found their job role restricted, either immediately or over time, meaning that in total a quarter of the sample experienced downgrades and restrictions. The perceived 'nature' of managerial and professional work (discourse 1, section 5.2) was the principal explanation for the downgrades and restrictions, indicating that a part-time-friendly culture is not a sufficient condition for the emergence of quality part-time jobs: job design issues need to be addressed too.

Downgrading from professional work to back-office or support work meant some adjustment (downwards) in one's *professional* identity, but for mothers in particular, this sometimes felt like a better option than the only perceived alternative, which was an inconsistent *personal* identity, involving high stress and failure to fulfil any of one's life roles adequately (Blair-Loy, 2003). Although the numbers in this study were too small to draw conclusions about the impact of downgrading on identity (and therefore on subsequent work 'choices'), this finding tends to confirm the literature which points out the limitations and contradictions in women's identity choices at work (Dick and Hyde, 2006; Campbell and van Wanrooy, 2013; Fagan and Walthery, 2011; Lewis and Simpson, 2010).

Availability for time periods

Most of the research participants made themselves available, or contactable, to a greater or lesser degree, during their time off. This confirms previous literature which shows that managerial and professional work and identity are characterized by constant availability, always putting work before non-work activities (Kuhn, 2006; Lawrence and Corwin, 2003; Seron and Ferris, 1995; Kalleberg and Epstein, 2001) and no expectation of 'predictable time off' (Perlow and Porter, 2009; Perlow, 2012).

The idea of calling on colleagues for cover or support during their absence was extremely rarely mentioned at negotiation stage: such a collaboration with colleagues would contradict the discourse of part-time as a personal lifestyle choice and therefore a personal rather than collective responsibility (see discourse 2, section 5.3).

Responsibility for workload

Many research participants were unable to negotiate a reduction from full-time-equivalent outputs – and did not expect to be able to do so. Where part-time was viewed as a personal lifestyle choice and therefore a personal

responsibility, the reallocation of workload to colleagues was not an option: the imperative was to avoid impact on colleagues, and therefore part-timers frequently found themselves continuing to deliver 100% outputs for 60 or 80% pay. This finding confirms previous work characterizing the 'nature' of managerial and professional work as boundless, defined not by a specific number of hours, but by doing whatever it takes to get the job done (Kalleberg and Epstein, 2001). Other studies have also shown that part-timers are expected to deliver full-time-equivalent workload (Hyde, 2008; Campbell et al., 2011) and, where the tasks are of unpredictable length, to stay on to finish it (Dick and Cassell, 2004).

Rousseau (2006) differentiates between *ex ante* i-deals, formed during recruitment to a new post, and *ex post* i-deals which involve a change to the terms of employment after the individual has started a job. In an *ex ante* i-deal, negotiating power is derived from the individual's value in the market, but in an *ex post* situation, it comes from the relationship with the employer. While these sources of negotiating power held true for part-timers in this study, the ability to negotiate a feasible workload was more closely related to the pre-existence or not of the job as a *full-time job*; when part-timers took on a job previously done by a full-timer (either themselves or their predecessors) they found it harder to negotiate a reduced workload. This may suggest a structural impediment to part-time work, such as the perceived 'nature' of the work (the working practices which prevented substitution of one person for another) or a resourcing issue (being unable to find someone else to do 20% of the job) rather than any lack of will on the part of the employer or manager.

Career and identity negotiation

There is a prolific existing literature which shows that part-time is understood as a reduced commitment to career in many organizations, and that male-pattern full-time career structures and expectations make promotion up a corporate career hierarchy particularly difficult for part-timers (Lane, 2004; Hoque and

Kirkpatrick, 2003; Lane, 2000; MacDermid et al., 2001; Guillaume and Pochic, 2009; Durbin and Tomlinson, 2010).

Awareness of the long-term career penalty of transition to part-time was universal in this study but the penalty was accepted as a necessary consequence of the 'choice' to work part-time (Dick, 2004; 2009). At negotiation stage, most part-timers were more concerned to work out the immediate practicalities, and did not expect their employers to be concerned about their career progress. However, a very small minority of part-timers in this study made a point of stating their continuing career ambitions as part of the negotiation stage.

6.2.6 Adaptation: a job crafting process

Sometimes the negotiation of the part-time i-deal resulted in a workable part-time job, particularly if the nature of the work was 'suitable'. However, intensive job crafting typically continued over the first 6-12 months after the i-deal. During this adaptation period, the individual was no longer involved in formal negotiation with the employer or its representatives: no organizational permission was involved. In this sense, the development of the PTWA was different from the i-deal process, which concludes with a phase of *maintaining* the formally negotiated deal. Part-timers in the present study were engaged in a much more active process of *changing* some key elements of the deal – a process of job crafting (Wrzesniewski and Dutton, 2001).

While the job crafting model suggests that job crafting behaviours are aimed at *enhancing* the meaning of the job, part-timers were often using crafting behaviours in order to *retain* meaningful work and therefore a positive self-image as a professional and organizational member in a situation of high constraint. The behaviour involved in the crafting of a part-time job was also driven by the search for control, and particularly control over their time, which Sturges (2012, p.1545) characterizes as 'temporal crafting' or 'managing the length, timing and temporal experience of the working day'.

Wrzesniewski and Dutton (2001) identified three types of individual job crafting: task, relational and cognitive. A later category of 'collaborative' job crafting was added by Leana et al. (2009). Part-time job crafting processes have here been divided into these four categories.

Physical task crafting

Physical task crafting involves the individual (working alone and informally) changing the number, scope and type of job tasks (Wrzesniewski and Dutton, 2001). Part-timers changed their physical tasks for two purposes: to reduce workload or scope of responsibility, and to maximize predictable and/or uninterrupted time off. This latter supports Sturges' finding that an important element of crafting a work-life balance was temporal crafting.

Collaborative job crafting

Collaborative crafting is described as 'joint effort among employees in the service of changing work process' (Leana et al., 2009, p.1173). It involves two or more employees altering the work to meet shared objectives. Part-timers in my study had no warrant for group-level change: rather, because the transition to part-time was characterized as a personal lifestyle choice and personal responsibility (discourse 2, section 5.3), there was a cultural imperative *not* to impact on or involve colleagues. Insofar as the objective (to reduce their workload and cover gaps in their availability) 'belonged' to the individual, the 'collaborative' job crafting described by participants in the present study (despite involving other people) stops short of the activity defined by Leana et al. (2009). Those resourceful individuals who managed to enrol colleagues in the re-allocation of tasks, or in managing their schedule of availability, were using their powers of persuasion or personal relationships, and offering something in return ('fair trade' or a development opportunity). Only when the objective is collectively redefined as, for example, organizational resourcing, or providing a continuous service to clients, could the activity be truly collaborative.

Where part-timers succeeded in involving colleagues, the range of options for adapting a PTWA became much larger than for those part-timers who job crafted alone. This finding confirms the literature on group attempts to achieve greater temporal flexibility (Briscoe, 2007; Perlow, 2001; Perlow, 2012) and the group redesign of work processes with the explicit aim of enabling every worker to have a personal life (Rapoport et al., 2002; Bailyn, 2006). These studies have shown group redesign to be more effective than individual redesign, offering efficiencies in planning, information flow and project scheduling, and also more equitable, offering opportunities for all group members to manage their work and personal life.

By engaging in collaborative job crafting, part-timers were able to redesign work to achieve two important working practices: substitutability, which enables colleagues to cover gaps, and predictability, which reduces both the need for cover during gaps, and emergency interruptions to part-timers' time off. Substitutability has been shown to be important in increasing opportunities for part-time work in groups of low-skill workers (Tomlinson, 2006) and can increase temporal flexibility in groups with similar professional qualifications who follow standardized bureaucratic procedures (Briscoe, 2007). In Perlow's (2009; 2012) action research aimed at alleviating the pressure experienced by consultants at a professional services firm to be constantly connected to work, planning ahead to create greater predictability enabled all members of the group to take 'predictable time off' without interruptions. The third type of adaptation, knowledge management, was discussed but not achieved by participants: it would require the types of interaction and information exchange described by Lawrence and Corwin (2003).

Relational job crafting

Relational crafting involves exercising discretion over with whom one interacts while doing the job, and changing either or both of the quality or amount of interaction with others at work (Wrzesniewski and Dutton, 2001). In the present research, relational crafting played a very minor part, and tended to be a by-

product of the other types of crafting: some part-timers found satisfaction in training up juniors to take over elements of one's job; improving work processes in a way that benefitted the whole team; and being a part-time role model for others. Other adaptations made to relationships, such as cutting down on social interaction or hiding one's part-time status, were not undertaken in order to increase meaning, but to avoid a negative self-image, which takes us into the realm of cognitive crafting.

Cognitive crafting and provisional identity construction

Cognitive crafting is concerned with how one defines and understands the job: like the other forms of crafting, it results from the search for meaning in the job and affects the crafter's identity (Wrzesniewski and Dutton, 2001; Sturges, 2012). In this study, a PTWA was understood to involve what might in other contexts be regarded as full-time behaviours – delivering full-time-equivalent outputs, working during one's days off, even hiding one's part-time status. In a professional or managerial context, these behaviours were defined as 'being part-time'. Seen from a more critical perspective, the willingness to accept full-time-equivalent workload and full-time availability in return for 80% pay appears almost perverse (Dick and Hyde, 2006) and verges on exploitation (Williams et al., 2013). The discourses identified in chapter 5 help to make sense of the contradictions between on the one hand being paid a part-time salary and on the other delivering full-time outputs and being available during one's time off: in order to retain a meaningful, quality, part-time job, and a professional identity, part-timers had to compromise their 'part-timeness' and behave like a full-timer. A part-time professional job was cognitively crafted as requiring full-time behaviours in the ways set out in table 17 below.

Redefining part-time as:	Cognitive crafting of full-time behaviours as:
Working, or accepting interruptions, during time off	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discourse 1: The unpredictable 'nature' of the work • Discourse 2: Taking responsibility for making PT work: not inconveniencing colleagues; returning the 'favour' done by the organization in 'allowing' part-time work • Discourse 3: Being professional: accepting the reality of the commercial world; delivering for the client
Delivering 100% outputs for 80% pay (work intensification)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discourse 1: The 'nature' of the work prevents change to working practices, which makes 'accommodating' PT difficult and expensive – so part-timers have to compensate by being more efficient and absorbing the cost of fixed-volume activities. • Discourse 2: Taking personal responsibility for making PT work – avoiding impact on colleagues and clients by delivering FTE workload.

Table 17 Cognitive crafting of full-time job behaviours as part-time

Dick & Cassell (2004) found that women police officers justified the difficulty of retaining women in the police force in quality part-time jobs because of the nature of the work rather than the attitudes of police officers: they suggest that this is an attempt by women to defend their own identity as professional police officers. The 'full-time-equivalent' behaviours in the table above also contributed to constructing a professional identity. Ibarra (1999, p.766) suggests that 'people make identity claims by conveying images that signal how they view themselves or hope to be viewed by others'. Being part-time was not how some people wanted to be viewed: those who hid their part-time status

found this to be essential for constructing or retaining a professional identity. Others were able to 'come out' as part-timers, at least to some of their clients or colleagues, but they adopted different self-presentation tactics (e.g. making availability messages loose or vague; not using the label 'part-time'), and then either discarded them or adopted them permanently, depending on both external reactions and internal feelings of authenticity (Ibarra, 1999).

Work relationships play a key role in developing work identity by 'reflecting back, or not, elements of this identity' (Wrzesniewski and Dutton, 2001, p186). In 'hiding' an element of their work identity from their colleagues and clients, part-timers reduced the opportunities for this 'reflecting back' and perhaps also the authenticity of their interaction with colleagues and clients, which might require them to engage in further identity work.

6.2.7 The end of the process and the career impact of a PTWA

In Wrzesniewski and Dutton's (2001) model, job crafting practices have specific effects on the design of the job and the social environment at work, which lead to general effects on the meaning of work and one's work identity. My findings suggest that experimentation with provisional selves may happen at each stage of the process of development of a PTWA, and so will influence the identity position with which the individual starts the next stage.

Experimentation with the PTWA itself may continue until the individual leaves the job: at this point, the crafting and identity construction enabled by the context will have influenced career identity. Ibarra (1999) suggests that provisional identities are more easily adopted and discarded at early stages of one's career. The transition to part-time work at age 35 might therefore have a greater impact on professional identity construction than the transition to part-time at age 55: since it is mostly women who go part-time at earlier life stages, this may throw some light on the alternative career 'preferences' of part-time women.

6.2.8 Summary of section

The process of developing a PTWA is a proactive, goal-oriented individual activity which resembles a combination of the formal negotiation of an i-deal and an informal process of job crafting. The fit is not perfect, but broadly speaking, stage 1 of the PTWA development corresponds to stage 1 of job crafting; stages 2 and 3 of PTWA development correspond to stages 1 and 2 of the i-deal process; while stage 4 of PTWA development corresponds to stage 3 of job crafting. Figure 6 presents the process graphically.

The research also shows that the development of a PTWA was enclosed within the individual's development and discarding of provisional identities, a process triggered by the work role transition to a new PTWA. This process framed and shaped the individual's options at each stage. The available discourses were highly constraining of part-time work, leaving little room for the construction of a coherent identity as a part-time professional: the work processes, job designs and professional identity discourses needed for successful part-time work were in direct conflict with those created and adapted for (male) ideal workers (Acker, 1990; Williams et al., 2013; Williams, 2000). The transition to part-time felt like a fragile process, with potential part-timers falling at every fence: the research did not support the 'free choice' of working hours described by Hakim (2002).

Some of the more significant parts of the development of the PTWA – the workload, the degree of availability during time off – were not part of the formal negotiation (the i-deal). Instead, their development was an informal, and possibly even subversive, activity, carried out largely under the corporate radar by the individuals themselves, and achieved over time. However, two opportunities for reconciling organizational and individual needs were identified: the timing of the transition to part-time to coincide with the organizational timetable; and the collaborative crafting of working practices to achieve effective resourcing or continuous client service.

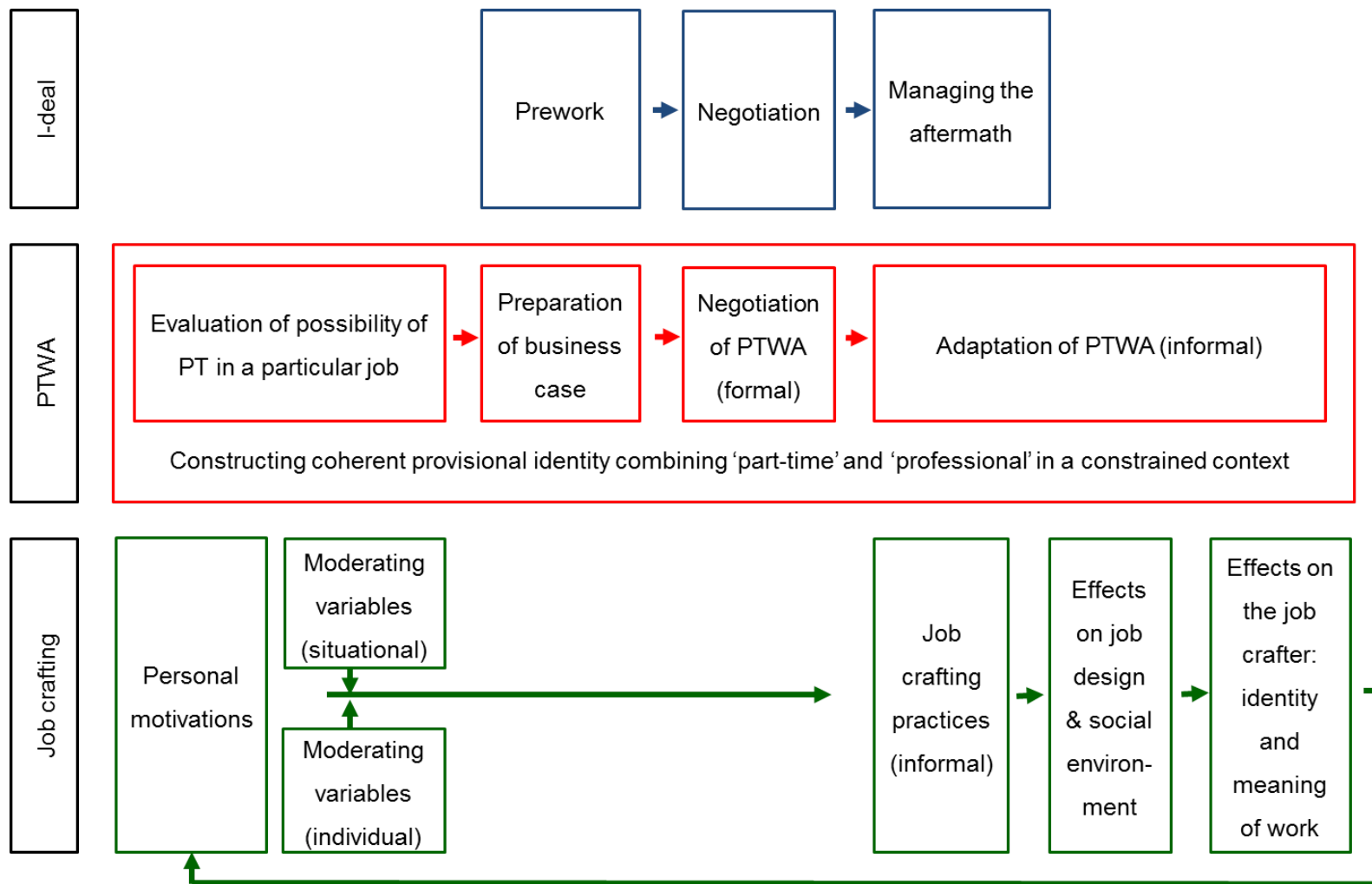


Figure 6 Development of PTWA compared to i-deals and job crafting

6.3 Three sets of discourses of part-time work

6.3.1 Introduction

The development of a PTWA has been presented as a process which is bound up with the identity construction process: as professionals and managers transition to each new PTWA, they attempt to construct a coherent identity which combines the concepts of 'part-time' and 'professional'. Kuhn (2006) showed how professionals' working-time commitments result from the collection of a *consistent* set of discourses: the individual constructs a coherent identity from the array of internal and external working-time discourses available to them. Dick and Hyde (2006) suggested that part-time professionals have historically accepted their own marginalization not because of a predisposition to prefer non-work roles, but because they were attempting to construct secure and meaningful identities, within the constraints of current discourses, both at work and in society. They suggest that the discourses of professional identity which dominate in organizations subjectify existing power relations, meaning that part-time women regard their marginalization as 'normal'; but also that identity can be constructed differently where different discourses are available, enabling a more conscious resistance to structural norms.

Nentwich and Hoyer (2012, p.5) take a similarly emancipatory approach to part-time work, noting that part-time work violates the dominant discourses of professionalism (Lawrence and Corwin, 2003) and conceptualizing 'resistance to the dominant discourse as a constant dialogue between norm-confirming argument and norm-contesting counter-argument'. Nentwich and Hoyer go on to identify the importance of challenging the assumptions underlying full-time norms: 'alternative realities' (Nentwich and Hoyer, 2012, p.12) can only be imagined if these assumptions are not only challenged, but also replaced, by creating a new, universally applicable taken-for-granted assumption.

In the contexts studied here, there was some crossover with the discourses and underlying assumptions identified by Nentwich and Hoyer, and I also found

support for work on the discourses of part-time work by Lawrence and Corwin (2003), Kuhn (2006), Dick and Hyde (2006) and Meiksins and Whalley (2002).

This section relates my three sets of dominant discourses and counter-arguments to existing literature, and identifies the underlying assumptions which either constrain opportunities for developing a PTWA or imagine what Nentwich and Hoyer (2012) call 'alternative realities'.

6.3.2 The 'nature' of managerial and professional work

The first of the three sets of discourses of part-time work found in this study reflects some of the literature about the 'nature' and design of managerial and professional work, and the 'suitability' of managerial and professional jobs for part-timers.

Dominant discourse: the 'nature' of the work means that some jobs are 'unsuitable' for part-timers

The dominant discourse about the nature of the work was that some types of managerial and professional work cannot be performed on a part-time basis: this discourse rests on the assumption that some types of work 'by nature' (and therefore essentially and permanently) have characteristics which make them unsuitable.

My study has identified three such characteristics, all of which are referenced (although not codified) in previous studies of part-time managers and professionals: unpredictability (Meiksins and Whalley, 2002; Lee et al., 2002; Briscoe, 2007; Dick, 2009; Dick and Cassell, 2004; Donnelly, 2006); fast pace of work (Meiksins and Whalley, 2002; Kossek and Lee, 2005; van Echtelt et al., 2006); and interdependent tasks and a high need for interaction with colleagues (Meiksins and Whalley, 2002; Lee et al., 2002).

Opposing discourse: any job can be done part-time with the appropriate resources and working practices

The most successful counter-argument was based on the assumption that full-time jobs and working practices have been culturally constructed, and can therefore be deconstructed, and reconstructed in different units of analysis (4 days; 60% etc), using different working practices. This assumption reflects previous literature which, instead of 'fixing the part-timers', proposes to 'fix the working practices' (Dick and Hyde, 2006; Campbell and van Wanrooy, 2013), so that fast-paced and unpredictable work does not require long and unpredictable hours. This radical proposition also reflects the strand of literature on full-time temporal flexibility which shows that much greater temporal flexibility can be achieved with group-level change, and suggests that the barriers to temporal flexibility are located not in the nature of the work, but in the way that work is organized at the team level (Briscoe, 2007; Rapoport et al., 2002; Perlow, 2001; Perlow, 2012; Perlow and Kelly, 2014; Bailyn, 2006).

Three specific alternative working practices were identified by participants in this research, and these can be found scattered throughout various studies of flexible working, temporal flexibility and part-time work, although again this work has not been codified. First, my finding that part-timers ironed out unpredictability through forward planning and organization reflects work by Perlow (1999) and Watts (2009) which showed that a firefighting or crisis mentality, which expects and even valorizes unpredictability, prevents temporal flexibility, and encourages presenteeism.

Secondly, my finding that sharing responsibilities and relationships meant that team members could substitute for each other during gaps in availability builds on several studies of temporal flexibility. Greater substitutability can be achieved by: team-centred (rather than managerial-centred or knowledge-centred) coordination of tasks and information flow (Perlow, 2001); more formalized rules and procedures, codifying knowledge about clients, to reduce client-to-worker specificity (ie increase substitutability) and enable even client-facing work to be shared between team members (Briscoe, 2007); the

normalization of gaps in availability and the sharing or transfer of knowledge, tasks and client relationships between workers (Briscoe, 2007; Perlow and Porter, 2009). Nentwich & Hoyer (2012, p.10) also mention substitutability, or 'the assumption that important tasks are assigned to irreplaceable people' as a type of challenge to the dominant discourse of the 'nature' of the work.

Thirdly, one participant's suggestion that better knowledge management could solve the problem of part-timers missing out on progress during their absences reflects Briscoe's (2007) finding that better knowledge management was achieved by a more systematic and codified recordkeeping, but also a team orientation towards each client. It also builds on the work by Lawrence and Corwin (2003) which suggests alternative interaction processes to enable part-timers to retain their organizational membership.

A less successful counter-argument to the discourse that the unpredictable nature of the work required constant availability was the suggestion that full-timers can't always be available either. While this has the benefit of categorizing both full-timers and part-timers as 'in the same boat', and not 'other' as in discourse 3 (section 5.4), it fails to challenge the assumption that gaps in availability can't be filled by colleagues – in other words, as in Nentwich and Hoyer's (2012) study, the link between being present and taking responsibility (delivering) remains intact.

6.3.3 Responsibility for part-time working arrangements

The second set of discourses found in this study concerned the allocation of responsibility for part-time work: the dominant discourse categorized part-time as a personal lifestyle choice, and therefore a personal responsibility, while counter-arguments regarded part-time as an organizational issue. This section sets those opposing discourses within the literature about preferred and actual working hours, the debate about personal choice or preference, and the role of organizations in 'accommodating', facilitating or encouraging the design and development of part-time jobs (Lee et al., 2000).

Dominant discourse: part-time as a personal lifestyle choice and personal responsibility

This study confirms the extensive literature highlighting the representation of part-time in the language of personal lifestyle choice. Only Hakim (2002) takes this at face value, while other research has interpreted the language of choice as a function of limited perceptions of what is possible (Dick and Hyde, 2006; Lewis and Simpson, 2010; van Wanrooy and Wilson, 2006; Ozbilgin et al., 2011; Broadbridge and Simpson, 2011) when the masculine ideal worker is represented as the gender-neutral norm (Acker, 1990; Williams, 2000; Williams, 2013). Williams (2000) locates the origin of this rhetoric of choice in the ideology of domestic work as the 'natural' focus for women and market work as the 'natural' focus for men, so that mothers have a choice about whether or not to engage in paid work at all. The same rhetoric of choice is also used by high-status career women who opt out of their professional careers to become stay-at-home mothers (Stone, 2007).

The representation of part-time as a personal lifestyle choice rests on the assumption that existing working practices are working-hours-neutral, in that they equally support any individual's 'choice' of hours. This assumption allows organizations, to some degree, to abdicate responsibility for *implementing* a PTWA (Webber and Williams, 2008). Having a policy could maintain an illusion of offering a free choice, although having a policy has been shown to be an insufficient condition for the emergence of quality part-time jobs (Ford and Collinson, 2011; Kirby and Krone, 2002; Ryan and Kossek, 2008; Eaton, 2003; McDonald and Bradley, 2007). Both the organizations in this study had part-time-supportive organizational policies while simultaneously maintaining cultures and structures designed around male-patterned, ideal-worker jobs and careers (Acker, 1990; Williams et al., 2013; Williams, 2000).

The discourse of choice also led to work intensification for part-timers, who often delivered full-time-equivalent outputs and made themselves available during their time off. Kelliher and Anderson (2009) explain this work intensification as both imposed by circumstances and as a form of reciprocal

social exchange: this research suggests that the discourse of ‘two-way flexibility’ (working during one’s time off) represents not only an exchange for the ‘favour’ of being allowed to work part-time, but also an attempt to avoid impact on colleagues, as well as a necessary part of ‘being professional’.

The issue of how organizations might deal with the ‘missing 20%’ has not been addressed in depth in the literature. Kossek & Lee (2005) identify four ways of ‘making work go away’: avoiding certain types of work, creating a new position which avoids certain types of work, job-sharing, and reallocating responsibilities to other team members. Only the last of these presents a challenge to the norm that the individual is responsible for designing their PTWA without impact on their colleagues.

Opposing discourse: challenging both personal responsibility for part-time and the neutrality of working practices

Although most participants in this study continued to take personal responsibility for designing their own PTWA, there were a few suggestions and examples of ways in which organizations could create a more level playing field for part-timers. These suggestions rested on the assumption that existing working practices, far from being working-hours-neutral, were in fact discriminating against part-timers – paralleling the literature on how masculine organizational cultures and career patterns discriminate against women while retaining a veneer of gender-neutrality (Lewis and Simpson, 2010; Ozbilgin et al., 2011; Broadbridge and Simpson, 2011).

A few participants had partially redefined part-time as a team resourcing issue (even, in one case, a client continuity issue), rather than an individual lifestyle issue, which enabled them to divide up tasks and relationships with colleagues or subordinates so that they could shed 20-40% of their, or their full-time predecessor’s, work. This was a successful challenge to the idea that part-time must be accomplished without having an impact on colleagues (Nentwich and Hoyer, 2012).

Two further challenges to the working-hours-neutrality of existing practices were identified, neither of which is covered in existing part-time literature. These were the suggestion of organizational investment in fixed-volume activities (rather than the individual compensating the organization for the cost of them); and changing promotion criteria to the assessment of potential and contribution to team goals, rather than the volume of extra-role activities compared to full-time colleagues.

6.3.4 Categorizing part-time workers

The third set of discourses found in this study concerned the categorization of part-timers: were they stigmatized as 'other' or recognized as the 'new normal'? This section sets those opposing discourses within the extensive literature about part-timers' professional and organizational identity and the impact of non-work roles.

Dominant discourse: part-timers as 'other'

The dominant discourse of professional identity in this research characterized part-timers as 'other': in all four research sites, some part-timers felt lucky and grateful to be 'accommodated'. This finding confirmed literature on the association of full-time working hours with professionalism and commitment (Lawrence and Corwin, 2003; Dick and Hyde, 2006; Smithson, 2005; McDonald et al., 2009; Tsouroufli et al., 2011), the flexibility stigma and the work devotion schema (Williams et al., 2013), and the dominance of the ideal-worker norm which prioritizes work over non-work roles (Acker, 1990; Williams 2000).

Williams et al. (2013) identify the 'work devotion schema' as a source of the flexibility stigma: work devotion, springing from the protestant work ethic, expects that work is the central moral purpose of life. In the current research, part-timers' 'otherness' came not only from failing to devote themselves to the morally worthy world of paid work, but also from their disconnection from the

organizational imperative to work as much as possible in order to compete in the commercial marketplace (Ashley and Empson, 2012).

I also suggest that part-timers are further marginalized by the strong paradigm of the 'normal' working week. Where availability during the 'normal' working week implies commitment and professionalism, part-timers found that reducing their salary (while continuing to deliver FTE outputs) could ring-fence their time off – but this time off still represented a degree of 'otherness'. 'Being there', and particularly participating in significant interaction rituals, has a symbolic function as well as a practical one: it indicates organizational membership, so failure to attend important meetings or other interactions, regardless of their practical importance to the part-timer getting the job done, can exclude part-timers from membership (see Lawrence and Corwin, 2003).

Opposing discourse: part-timers as the 'new normal'

One counter-argument challenged the otherness and lower professional status of part-timers by suggesting that part-timers with significant non-work roles could still be effective organizational members, particularly since 'complete human beings' with a non-work hinterland, even if they had fewer hours to give to the organization, had more maturity, perspective, and judgement than 'ideal workers' who worked long hours and existed solely for work. This discourse not only challenges some basic assumptions of full-time or 'ideal' work – that time indicates performance; that home and work spheres must be kept separate – but also offers an alternative way in which part-timers might contribute something which full-timers could not – their life experiences, which made them better decision-makers. This finding overlaps with the conclusions of a study of long-hours workers over nine years, which found that creativity, ethics and judgement increased when long-hours workers began to work less (Michel, 2011). The discourse of authenticity as a complete human being and 'bringing your whole self to work' supports the work-life balance literature which shows how non-work enriches work (Kossek et al., 2010; Bailyn, 2006; Gatrell et al., 2013).

The second counter-argument portrayed part-timers as ‘just like the full-timers’, in that neither group works the full 168 hours in every week. This counter-argument attempted to re-categorize part-timers together with full-timers, rather than as ‘other’, and, to the extent that this implies the common-sense understanding that nobody can work 168 hours a week, it was successful. However, the challenge was only partial because the underlying assumption – that long hours denote commitment, ambition and excellence – remained intact.

6.3.5 Summary of section

This section has presented those majority discourses which constrain part-time working, and counter-arguments which challenge those discourses. Building on Nentwich and Hoyer’s (2012) analysis of the assumptions underlying the discourses of part-time work, I have codified a list of discourses relevant to part-time work, and suggested which underlying assumptions contribute to opportunities for ‘alternative realities’ for part-timers.

Dominant discourse	Counter-argument
<p>Managerial and professional jobs are unpredictable, fast-paced and interdependent; hence, some categories of work, especially managerial or client-facing work, are unsuitable for part-timers.</p> <p><i>Assumption: the nature of the work is fixed and unchangeable.</i></p>	<p>Alternative team working practices (predictability, substitutability, knowledge management) can make any job suitable for part-timers.</p> <p><i>Assumption: Work is culturally constructed as fast and unpredictable; alternative working practices can be developed to enable any job to be done part-time.</i></p> <p>Full-timers can’t always be available either.</p> <p><i>Assumption: Fails to challenge link between being present and taking responsibility (delivering outputs).</i></p>

<p>The individual has to make PT work without impacting on colleagues or clients, so part-timers have to be more efficient, and also compensate for the cost of fixed-volume activities. Potential for promotion should be assessed by competing with peers to deliver extra-role activities</p> <p><i>Assumption: PT is a personal lifestyle choice.</i></p>	<p>Tasks and relationships can be re-allocated when a part-timer replaces a full-timer.</p> <p>Fixed-volume activities are an organizational investment, not a team-level cost burden or an individual-level job design issue.</p> <p>Promotion can be assessed by skills and potential, and contribution to team goals, rather than volume of extra-role activities compared with colleagues.</p> <p><i>Assumption: Part-time is an organizational issue – an exchange of outputs for pay.</i></p>
<p>Part-timers are ‘other’ because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • they don’t follow the ‘work devotion schema’ which prioritizes work over non-work; • they don’t identify entirely with the organizational imperative to work as much as possible; • they prioritize time over money; • they’re not available during the ‘normal’ working week. <p><i>Assumption: work is more important than non-work; it is morally superior.</i></p> <p><i>Assumption: there is still a ‘normal’ working week; working hours match business hours.</i></p>	<p>Part-timers with significant non-work roles are still effective organizational members; they may have more maturity, perspective and judgment than ideal workers.</p> <p><i>Assumption: It’s ‘normal’ and ‘natural’ for workers (ie people) to have a personal life – which is a source of work capability.</i></p> <p>We’re all part-timers now: work never stops in a global competitive environment and nobody works 168 hours a week.</p> <p><i>Assumption: There’s no ‘normal working week’ in a global workplace; implies some substitutability between workers but doesn’t challenge working hours as a signal of commitment and performance.</i></p>

Table 18 Summary of dominant discourses, counter-arguments and underlying assumptions

6.4 Chapter summary

This chapter has represented the development of a PTWA as a process which resembles the negotiation of a task i-deal, but which continues after the formal discussion with the line manager. Some of the more significant parts of the development of the PTWA – the workload, the degree of contactability during time off – far from being a question of formally negotiated employee relations (an i-deal) happened during an informal process of job crafting carried out informally by the individual with their colleagues and clients. The importance of professional identity as a constraint on the process has been highlighted using the concept of ‘provisional selves’ which part-timers identify, experiment with, and evaluate throughout the process.

The chapter has also presented three sets of discourses relevant to the development of a PTWA. These three closely interlocking sets of part-time discourses have been related to the existing (diverse and as yet largely uncoded) literature on discourses of part-time work and part-time professional and managerial workers. The assumptions underlying the discourses have also been analysed to identify which ones tend to encourage long hours and ideal workers, and constrain the development of a PTWA; and which ones tend to facilitate the development of a PTWA by providing a new, universally-applicable taken-for-granted.

7 CONCLUSION AND CONTRIBUTION

7.1 Chapter introduction

In this final chapter, I summarize the purpose and findings of this research, and then articulate the contributions to knowledge, theory and practice. The thesis ends with personal reflections and analysis of the limitations of the work, and considerations of future research.

7.2 Research overview

Research aims

This thesis was prompted by the anomaly that around a third of managers and professionals in western developed economies claim that they want to work less, and are prepared to be paid less: in other words, there are non-financial barriers to achieving a PTWA (O'Reilly and Fagan, 1998; Fagan, 2001; Stier and Lewin-Epstein, 2003; Boheim and Taylor, 2004; Reynolds and Aletraris, 2006). Furthermore, those managers and professionals who do achieve part-time status may end up in downgraded, poor-quality jobs (O'Reilly and Fagan, 1998; Visser, 2002; Connolly and Gregory, 2008; Lyonette et al., 2010). The aim of this research was to examine how and why a PTWA for managers and professionals emerges and develops.

A review of the literature on part-time managers and professionals revealed a fragmented and under-theorized field, with a shortage of recent, qualitative studies, especially in the private sector. Exploratory research therefore addressed a broad, open question – the barriers and facilitators of part-time working for managers and professionals. Findings highlighted that a PTWA developed as a process over time, constrained by both the nature of the work and the professional identity discourses available to the part-timer, as well as the organizational and national culture which had been highlighted in the previous literature. This suggested a process approach to the main study, which sought to explore what can be learnt from those who have achieved part-

time jobs, and specifically how a PTWA *emerges* and *develops*, avoiding the uncritical assumption that the arrangement is *caused* by the individual's personal preferences, or that the responsibility for the arrangement lies solely with the individual rather than the organization, team, manager or society. The main research question was:

- How and why does a part-time working arrangement (PTWA) for managers and professionals emerge and develop?

Sub-questions addressed how a PTWA is defined; the start point, stages and end point of the process; and the influence of the context within which the PTWA emerged and developed.

Research design and methods

Thirty-nine interviews were conducted with part-time managers and professionals in two organizations, a professional services firm and a large technology company, each operating in both the UK and the Netherlands, providing four different research sites. The Netherlands was chosen as a leading proponent of part-time working, while the UK has a liberal-market, individualist approach. Both organizations encouraged flexible working at more than policy level: this was important because the aim was to study a positive (the emergence and development of the arrangement) as well as a negative (the barriers to getting there), and thereby add to the action spaces (Willig, 1999) available for potential part-timers. Narrative interviews asked part-timers to describe the timeline leading from their first thoughts of working part-time to their current PTWA, with participants drawing on their experience of 'critical incidents' when part-time became relevant to them to draw out meanings and understandings of part-time. Interviews were recorded and transcripts were analysed using template analysis. Analysis began with a process of induction, by which the four-stage process of development of the PTWA was revealed. By analysing what had allowed these individuals to achieve a PTWA, it was then

possible to identify those discourses which constrained or facilitated the development of the PTWA.

Research findings

Key findings were the four dimensions of a PTWA, the four-stage process of development of a PTWA, and three sets of discourses which facilitated or constrained that process.

The four dimensions of a PTWA were: the suitability of the job role for part-time; the schedule of availability; the workload or responsibilities; and the (often unarticulated) impact on career. The absence of the last two elements from many of the formal agreements raised a question about the definition of a part-time working arrangement, and indeed a part-time worker: many part-timers adopted some of the behaviours of full-timers, delivering full-time-equivalent outputs and making themselves available during their time off, while accepting a career penalty for their part-time status.

I further identified a four-stage process by which a PTWA emerges and develops: the individual's *evaluation* of the possibility of part-time work in a particular job; the individual's *preparation* of the case for part-time; the formal *negotiation* of the PTWA with the line manager; and the informal *adaptation* of the arrangement by the individual in the months and years after the agreement. This process is similar to the development of an idiosyncratic employment deal (Hornung et al., 2010; Rousseau, 2005) and a process of job crafting (Wrzesniewski and Dutton, 2001; Sturges, 2012; Leana et al., 2009). It takes place within the context of the individual's identity work: part-timers may construct successive provisional identities (Ibarra, 1999) which attempt to combine both 'part-time' and 'professional' as they make the transition into a new PTWA.

Three sets of discourses were found to be particularly significant for the development of both the PTWA and the individual's identity work as they made the transition to a new PTWA – perceptions of the 'nature' of the work and its

impact on the suitability of different types of jobs for part-timers; the allocation of responsibility for the PTWA to either the individual or, in part, to the team and organization; and the categorization of part-timers as either 'other' or the 'new normal'.

7.3 Contribution to knowledge

7.3.1 The PTWA as task i-deal and job crafting process in a situation of high constraint

The literature on i-deals has identified two categories of i-deal: the developmental i-deal and the flexibility i-deal (Rousseau et al., 2006). Task i-deals, which are concerned with job content as well as employment contracts (Hornung et al., 2010), have previously been found within the category of developmental i-deals: the present study has contributed to the i-deals literature by identifying a category of 'flexibility task i-deals'.

The study also contributes to the understanding of task i-deals in a situation of high constraint. Both i-deals and job crafting are theories of proactive and goal-oriented individual behaviour which tend to highlight individual agency over contextual limitations (Oldham and Hackman, 2010). Where the individual's goal is contrary to organizational norms and expectations, the process of developing a functioning work arrangement may not end with the formal i-deal, but instead may continue with an informal, unauthorized crafting of the job content, a longer process which, in the case of PTWAs, lasts 6-12 months in its intensive phase. Conflicting discourses also lead the individual to experiment with 'provisional identities' (Ibarra, 1999) at each stage of the process of transition to a PTWA, as they attempt to construct a coherent work identity which includes the seemingly mutually exclusive elements of 'part-time' and 'professional'. In such a situation of constraint, where the individual's goals are counter-cultural, even subversive, the formal and informal process of developing the working arrangement then becomes a dialectic (Van de Ven, 2007) between the individual and the organizational constraints, represented

not just by their manager (Hornung et al., 2010), but also their colleagues and clients (Clegg and Spencer, 2007).

7.3.2 Understanding working hours choices

The process of developing a PTWA was shown to be fragile and somewhat arbitrary, rather than within the control and 'free choice' of the individuals. This supports an understanding of working hours choices as highly constrained by context (Walsh, 1999; McRae, 2003; McDonald et al., 2006; Kan, 2007) rather than purely as the result of personal preferences (Hakim, 2002).

Although in general terms the Dutch context was more supportive of part-time work than the British context, and PSF more supportive than InfoCo, there was no simple binary relationship between easy development of a PTWA and nationality or organization: some Dutch part-timers struggled, even at PSF, and some British participants found a PTWA easy to achieve, even at InfoCo. The outer context, ie the national working-time regime and organizational policy, appears to be an insufficient condition for facilitating a PTWA for all those who might want it: the study therefore supports Lawrence and Corwin's (2003) finding that the local context is also important.

There were multiple opportunities and inducements for potential part-timers to decide to remain full-time at each stage of the process of developing a PTWA, which tends to support the growing stream of research (Ng and Feldman, 2008) which has identified significant drivers to work longer rather than to work less, including organizational identification (Perlow, 1998; Kuhn, 2006; Kunda, 1992) and professional identity (Dick and Hyde, 2006; Alvesson and Robertson, 2006; Merilainen et al., 2004); the intensification of work (McCann et al., 2008; White et al., 2003; Green, 2004) and the neo-liberal socio-economic system which encourages long hours in the belief that consumption is the best way of meeting human needs (Schor, 1991; James, 2008) and valorizes paid work as a morally worthwhile activity (Williams et al., 2013).

Those part-timers who made it to the end of the obstacle course described in the present research needed legal, organizational and managerial support, but they also – unless the work was slow-paced, predictable and largely independent, or they were prepared to accept work intensification – needed work redesign at team level (Bailyn, 2006; Perlow and Kelly, 2014) to improve predictability, substitutability and knowledge management. Those who sought promotion also needed working-hours-neutral performance assessment practices. As demonstrated by those who had at some point in the process decided that part-time was impossible, even those who eventually achieved a PTWA faced structural and cultural barriers: the three dominant discourses created a powerful regulatory effect, which suggests that there may be many other potential part-timers who didn't stay the course.

Nonetheless, the individual also remains an essential element of the inner context for the development of the PTWA: their work orientation and work-life balance needs remain part of the picture. While the counter-arguments presented here may generate opportunities for individual actions, it is not claimed that the dominant discourses *determine* the failure to achieve a PTWA. Rather, the array of available discourses (Kuhn, 2006) influenced the identity work – the 'provisional self' which the part-timer was able to construct – and this provisional self framed and enclosed each stage of the development of the PTWA.

7.3.3 Understanding part-timers' work intensification

Kelliher and Anderson (2009) have explained the work intensification experienced by part-time workers as both a form of imposed intensification and a form of reciprocal social exchange based on gratitude for being allowed to work part-time. The present study confirms and adds to those findings by identifying four contexts for negotiating a part-time workload: when a full-timer transitions to part-time in the same job; when a part-timer replaces a full-timer in a pre-existing job; when a part-timer is recruited into a newly-created job

tailored to their needs; and when a new part-time job is created for a part-timer removed from an 'unsuitable' job. Work intensification was less likely in the last two (which involved creating a new job) than the first two (where a part-timer replaced a full-timer), suggesting that intensification is partly a function of the pre-existence, or not, of a full-time job 'slot'.

I also suggest how gratitude for being 'allowed' to work part-time (Kelliher and Anderson, 2009) may co-exist with marginalization (Dick and Hyde, 2006). First, the discourse of the 'nature' of the work states that managerial and professional work requires long and unpredictable hours, so PTWAs are both inconvenient and expensive, and part-timers automatically become the uncommercial 'other'. Secondly, the discourse of personal responsibility for the 'choice' to work part-time, and the perception of existing working practices as working-hours-neutral, renders part-timers unable or unwilling to call on colleagues for redistribution of workload or covering gaps in availability. These two discourses combine to push part-timers into a position of simultaneous gratitude (for being 'accommodated') and marginalization (because of their 'otherness').

7.3.4 Understanding the part-time career penalty

The findings also add to explanations of how and why part-time work might impact negatively on careers. First, the three work characteristics identified as 'difficult' (pace, predictability and interdependence) contribute to an understanding of why occupational downgrading (Lyonette et al., 2010) is considered necessary for part-timers. Secondly, it has often been noted that part-timers are unable to find time for networking or development activities (Hoque and Kirkpatrick, 2003; McDonald et al., 2009; Hall et al., 2012; Durbin and Tomlinson, 2010). The discourses of the nature of the work and personal choice demonstrate how part-timers are rendered responsible for 'compensating' their employer for the extra expense of fixed-volume activities, and for the perceived inconvenience of not being available for part of the

‘normal’ working week, so that they ‘voluntarily’ give up networking and development activities. The discourse of ‘otherness’ also suggests why part-timers might accept this bargain. This understanding might in turn add to explanations of why so few men work part-time (Sheridan, 2004; Smithson and Stokoe, 2005; Smithson, 2005).

7.4 Contribution to theory: discourses as generative mechanisms for development of a PTWA or its failure to emerge

The key contribution for a study in a field with nascent theory is ‘providing a suggestive theory of the phenomenon that forms a basis for further inquiry’ (Edmondson and McManus, 2007). The model presented here is not intended to represent a universal or permanent ‘truth’, but to suggest avenues for further research.

A process theory of change needs to go beyond description, to identify the underlying plot or generative mechanisms. A process theory explains ‘an observed sequence of events [in this case, the development of a PTWA] in terms of some underlying generative mechanisms that have the power to cause events to happen in the real world [dominant discourses and the minority counter-arguments] and the particular circumstances or contingencies when these mechanisms operate [the inner and outer contextual factors]’ (Van de Ven, 2007, p.23). The model presented in figure 7 represents the four stages of the process of development of a PTWA, and suggests how the three sets of discourses act on the development of each stage.

The three dominant discourses provide mechanisms which help to explain the development of the four stages in the following ways. The first discourse, that the nature of the work was unsuitable for part-timers, underpinned the start of the process: part-timers who could not fulfil the ‘nature of the work’ criteria of constant availability and long hours had to be ‘accommodated’ as an

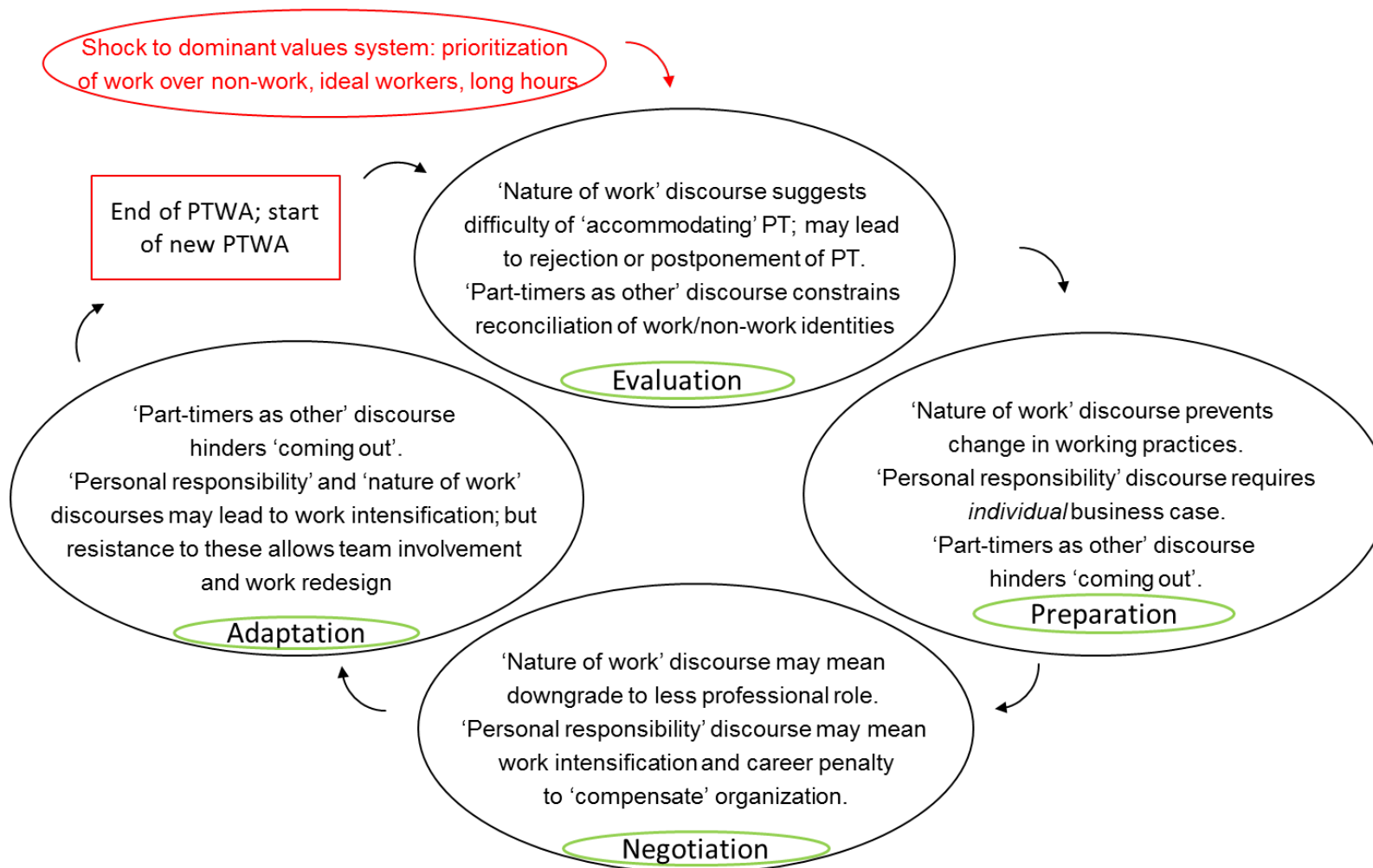


Figure 7 How discourses influence stages of development of PTWA

(inconvenient) exception to the norm – which automatically placed them outside the norm as the ‘other’. This had implications for their professional identity (discourse 3) and necessitated identity work at the evaluation stage (and subsequent stages) as they tried to construct a coherent identity from the apparently mutually exclusive concepts of ‘part-time’ and ‘professional’. The ‘nature of the work’ discourse might also lead to rejecting or postponing the rest of the process.

At the second stage, the understanding of part-time as a personal responsibility meant that the business case was an individual one, but also prevented any redesign of the job or of working practices which might impact on colleagues. When combined with the belief that the ‘nature’ of the work was fixed and unchangeable, the prospective part-timer was left with very few options, and often presented a business case which depended on intensifying their work effort to deliver FTE objectives and making themselves available during their time off. At the same time, the discourse of part-timers as ‘other’ impacted on willingness to request part-time at all.

At negotiation and adaptation stages, part-timers were already constructed as ‘other’ (discourse 3) which hindered ‘coming out’ as a part-timer to one’s boss, colleagues and clients: some part-timers maintained an ideal-worker façade for fear of the negative impacts of disclosing their part-time status. The ‘nature of the work’ discourse meant that some were downgraded to a more ‘suitable’ job, while the ‘personal choice’ discourse often resulted in part-timers accepting work intensification and failing to discuss career plans at negotiation stage. It was only at stage 4, adaptation, that some part-timers were able to counteract the dominant ‘nature of the work’ discourse by *informally* involving team members in a type of collaborative job crafting, which allowed them to reconstruct working practices and thereby reduce their own workload and maximize their predictable and uninterrupted time off. However, this was only possible for those who had overcome the dominant ‘part-timer as other’ discourse enough to ‘come out’ to colleagues.

The overwhelming dominance of the constraining discourses suggested that part-timers faced an uphill struggle to achieve a PTWA in these contexts. Working less emerged as a challenge to organizational norms, and a different challenge from that faced by those working flexibly but full-time.

The discourse of personal choice, and the assumed working-hours-neutrality of existing organizational practices, meant that organizations could, without apparent inconsistency, encourage part-time work as part of their talent retention strategy, while simultaneously retaining working practices, job designs and career structures which rendered part-time extremely difficult. Part-timers were encouraged to believe that part-time was possible, but the taken-for-granted assumptions hidden within the organizational practices and discourses militated against the emergence and development of a PTWA.

7.5 Contribution to practice

This study offers contributions to practice at three levels – organizational, team, and individual.

For those organizations which aim to offer a real choice of working hours – perhaps encouraging more part-timers in their workforce, to match the proportion who say they would like to work less in the workforce at large – part-time work needs to be positioned in relation to the three dominant discourses and counter-arguments. Is the organization prepared to rethink the ‘nature’ of the work and construct working practices which are universally applicable, rather than applicable only to ideal workers? This would mean offering *all* employees more predictability, substitutability and knowledge management. Secondly, will the organization position part-time as a personal lifestyle choice, or an organizational issue? The latter option implies creating working-hours-neutral resourcing practices (organizational investment in part-timers’ fixed-volume activities) and career development practices (assessing potential and contribution to team goals, rather than the volume of extra-role activities compared to full-time colleagues). And finally, if an organization wishes to

include part-timers as a 'new normal' type of organizational member, the cultural changes needed to support that decision require rethinking the 'work devotion schema' (Williams et al., 2013) and its subset of commercial values, the assumption that the prioritization of work over non-work implies a more effective worker, and the strong paradigm of the 'normal' working week.

At the team level, the manager receiving a request to work part-time needs to consider the four elements which make up a PTWA: the suitability of the work; availability for time periods; responsibility for outputs; and the impact of part-time work on professional identity and career. A manager wishing to recruit or retain a part-timer needs to redistribute workload amongst the team, encourage greater predictability and substitutability, and improve knowledge management to avoid the part-timer sinking into work intensification.

Finally, at the individual level, those working in a less part-time-friendly context may be able to use the job crafting techniques identified in sections 4.5.4 and 4.5.5 to manage workload down to an appropriate level, and to manage contactability during their time off. Those who have influence within the team may be able to include some of the team-based techniques to informally craft their job; others may find their options very limited, but the concept that a PTWA emerges and develops over time offers more opportunities for developing an appropriate arrangement than the concept of part-time as a one-off request with a yes or no answer.

7.6 Reflections and limitations

For me, this study was personal. I am aware of my own bias towards part-time as a work-life strategy. I positioned myself to interviewees as an insider in relation to the topic of flexible and part-time working. By mentioning upfront my experience as a consultant in implementing flexible working, my background in business, and being a mother, I wanted to position myself with interviewees as someone who understood both the individual and organizational issues in play. However, while speeding up trust and rapport, insider status also meant

constant vigilance to the issues of reflexivity and bias. I was careful to position the research as being about all types of part-timers, not just working mothers, and to clarify the constant confusion between these during the course of the interviews, and I had to remain aware of the danger of my own preconceptions in both cases.

I acknowledge that the interviews were co-constructions; and that interpretation of the findings was shaped by my own context and beliefs. My aim was not to discover a single objective truth which could be replicated by other researchers, but to explore and define a process, and its generative mechanisms, within a particular context. In doing so, I wanted to offer 'action spaces' (Willig, 1999) both to participants and, where relevant, to part-time workers in other contexts.

The small-scale nature of the study limits its generalizability to other contexts. For example, the contexts studied were in the private sector, in which there is widespread acceptance of the need to make a *business* case for PT working arrangements, whereas in the public and voluntary sectors, the discourse of legal and organizational *rights* is stronger (Dick, 2009). The contexts were also all large organizations, potentially offering more opportunities for work redesign and substitutability than small- or medium-sized organizations. The issues around the 'nature of the work' may also vary with different occupations, such that other work characteristics (beyond pace, unpredictability and interdependence) may present greater barriers in other settings, and other working practices (beyond substitutability, predictability and knowledge management) may need to be adopted.

Participants had all volunteered to take part, and might be assumed to have a considerable personal investment in alternatives to the traditional model of full-time work. There was a danger that they would overemphasize the positive aspects of part-time working and the possibilities for change, while minimizing any negative impacts on colleagues, clients or the organization. A further limitation is that each one had already jumped many hurdles to achieve their PTWA, perhaps indicating a group who were more confident, resilient or resourceful than others who gave up at the first fence: in this respect, the

conclusions may have over-stated the opportunities for change via individual rather than group or organization initiatives. Having said that, it was clear that many had volunteered for interview because they were grappling with the seemingly impossible conundrum of combining work and non-work: they hadn't resolved the problem or found it easy to address, but were in search of answers.

A further limitation comes from the nature of the narrative interview: it is possible that participants filtered out information which didn't fit their story, although this was mitigated as far as possible by the relatively large number of interviews and the post-interview group discussions.

Finally, the four-stage model of developing a PTWA suggests a simple, straightforward series of events, while in fact the process may be neither simple nor uni-directional. For example, workload might go up as well as down, with the influence of business or project cycles, economic circumstances, seasonal variations, or the departure of team colleagues; similarly, schedules of availability which change with personal needs may not always match organizational needs (Litrico et al., 2011). It is important therefore not to see the model presented here as 'the answer' which some research participants were seeking.

7.7 Further research

Given the limitations outlined above, and the research philosophy which does not aim to present a single truth, it is important that the conclusions drawn here are explored and tested in other countries and in other organizational contexts, particularly smaller organizations and public sector organizations. In different occupations, the perceived 'nature' of the work may present different barriers, and therefore different opportunities for reorganizing working practices, and different occupational cultures may provide different discourses which impact on the process in different ways.

Despite these limitations, this study has suggested that the barriers and facilitators of PTWAs need to be studied separately from other types of flexible working. Working less presents a more fundamental challenge to managerial and professional work norms and discourses than temporal or locational flexibility, let alone the very different phenomenon of *informal* temporal or locational flexibility (Kelliher and Anderson, 2009; Kelliher and Anderson, 2008) which was widespread in all four research sites and accepted as 'normal'. This is not just because the non-work activities which trigger a PTWA may mean that the individual has *less* flexibility around how they use their time: it's also because a business-neutral PTWA implies the involvement of others, to cover gaps in availability and share the workload at the point of transition. Findings also suggested that much greater study of the immediate local context – the manager, the team working practices and resourcing, and the perceived 'nature' of the work – is warranted, to complement the existing literature on national and organizational contexts.

The study has also highlighted differences in barriers and facilitators of a PTWA between team managers and non-managers. At InfoCo (but not at PSF), being a team manager was regarded as a barrier to part-time: however, while part-time team managers had more potential for unpredictable interruptions from their team members during their time off, they also had more opportunities for designing a part-time-appropriate workload through delegation. Further study might highlight other differences between the barriers and facilitators of part-time for team managers and non-managers.

Narratives at the evaluation stage – postponing part-time, and considering departure or remaining full-time – indicated that there may be many potential part-timers who never get to the preparation/negotiation stages, which is where most research on part-timers has concentrated. Those who want to work part-time but don't get beyond the (silent) evaluation stage may be hard to access in an organization, but are nonetheless worthy of further study, particularly as a means of adding to our understanding of why so few men work part-time (Sheridan, 2004). The presence in this study of a potential part-timer who had

been unable to create a part-time job and had developed his own unofficial 'short full-time' arrangement also provided some interesting food for thought. Informal 'short full-time' is a logical response to the need to find time for non-work activities in a long-hours working culture: it enables the retention of a full-time salary (albeit with fewer opportunities for career development or earning a bonus), so may be a more attractive option than part-time for those with breadwinning responsibility, often men, who prefer an informal arrangement with less overt impact on career or professional status (Kelliher and Anderson, 2009).

The four contexts for negotiating a part-time workload – when a full-timer transitions to part-time in the same job; when a part-timer replaces a full-timer in a pre-existing job; when a part-timer is recruited into a newly-created job tailored to their needs; and when a new part-time job is created for a part-timer removed from an 'unsuitable' job – led to different outcomes in terms of both the workload and the degree of restriction or downgrading of work. This codification indicates investigation of potentially different impacts on the part-timer's ability to sustain their PTWA, and their subsequent 'preferences' and career development. It also raises a question of definition: should those who deliver FTE outputs, and make themselves available during time off, be defined as part-timers at all?

The issue of occupational downgrading also merits further study in terms of its impact on identity. The numbers in this study were too small to draw conclusions about whether occupational downgrading had a different impact on both personal and professional identity, and subsequent career choices, from the impact of transition to part-time at the same occupational level.

The process described here referred to the emergence and development of a single PTWA for each participant, with the process starting again when an individual began to look for a new job. While the influence of the individual's personal backstory and work orientation has been much studied (Tomlinson, 2006; Lee and Kossek, 2005; Hall et al., 2012), the influence of past experience of developing a PTWA is also relevant, and future study might consider how the

development of one PTWA impacts on the individual's ability to develop another one, including the impact of previous PTWAs on professional identity.

Furthermore, Ibarra suggests (1999, p.765) that professional identity is more 'adaptable and mutable' at early stages of one's career. The transition to part-time work at age 35 would therefore have a greater impact on professional identity construction than the transition to part-time at age 55. Since women are more likely to make the transition to part-time at the earlier life stage, a comparison of the impact of age cohort and gender on part-timers' career identity and progression might add to debates about gender preferences and career models as well as understanding of the barriers and facilitators of PTWAs.

The discourse of work-life enrichment also merits further study with respect to part-timers: what specific attributes do part-timers (as opposed to full-time flexible or remote workers) bring to their work? Perspective, judgement and maturity were suggested by participants in this research; Michel (2011) found that creativity, ethics and judgement increased when long-hours workers began to work less. Are these universal attributes of those who work less?

Finally, it is not clear how effective this model of the development of a PTWA might be in creating change. Perlow and Kelly (2014) express doubts about the spread of their work redesign models to other organizations, first because such initiatives require investment, and secondly because less motivated employees may not be willing to participate. Further research might explore the power of the counter-arguments presented in the current study as a change model, not just at the individual level, as studied here, but at team and organizational level.

While the participants in this research had no warrant for change beyond their own individual job, and no authorization from their team or organization to make the sort of changes to work design needed for a non-stigmatized temporal flexibility or work-life balance (Perlow and Kelly, 2014), some of them were nonetheless involving team members in their personal initiatives, and moving towards an informal, unauthorized type of collaborative work redesign. These part-timers might be characterized as tempered radicals (Meyerson and Scully,

1995), working both *within* the system and *to change* the system, and dealing with all the ambiguity that represents. Meyerson and Scully suggest (1995, p.594) that 'tempered radicals create change in two ways: through incremental, semi-strategic reforms and through spontaneous, sometimes unremarkable, expressions of authenticity that implicitly drive or even constitute change.' Some of the participants in this research felt authentic enough in their part-time professional identity to become role models and even advocates for a different way of working, while others were collaborating with colleagues to make the incremental changes to working practices which might by their very existence enable more PTWAs to emerge and develop.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A Participants in exploratory research

Table A: PS UK participants			
Name and job role	%FTE	How long PT?	Reason for PT
Sophia, Strategy consultant	80%, 4 days, Mon-Thurs	5 years	Children
Sandrine, Market analysis (ex-strategy consultant)	60%, 3 days, Tues-Thurs	3 years	Children

ALSO INTERVIEWED AT PS UK: Amy, Sophia's direct report; Harry, Sophia's manager; Marianne, Sandrine's manager

Table B: PS Finland Participants			
Astrid, Technology consultant	4 days, Tues-Fri	6 months	Children
Henna, Tax consultant	60%, Tues-Thurs & part of Mon	1 year	Children
Oskar, Risk management consultant	60%, Mon, Wed, Thurs	1 year	Study

ALSO INTERVIEWED AT PS FINLAND: Stefan, Astrid's manager; Henrik, Astrid's direct report; Liisa, Henna's manager; Paivi, HR partner

Table C: EngCo Participants			
Peter, Business improvement manager	80% or 29 out of 36 hours, 2 flexible half days	7 months	Turned 50; to put something back; could afford it; time for elderly mother
Simon, Performance engineer	83% or 30 hours / week, Mon-Thurs	2.5 years	Could afford it; sick wife; pre-retirement; eldercare
Bradley, Engineering designer	70% or 25.5 hours, Tues-Thurs	4.5 years	Could afford it; spend time with kids; own business
Anthony, Senior project manager	60%, Mon-Wed	6 months	Start business; sick wife; doing too much at work
Paula, Project manager	80%, Mon-Thurs	9 months	Voluntary work; work stress; study; possibly career change

ALSO INTERVIEWED AT ENGCO: Tara, HR business partner

Appendix B Interview schedule

Introduction:

- Introduction to me and to study - describe aims of research
- Describe interview structure
- Confirm voluntary participation and confidentiality: you can decline any questions; stop recording; or opt out at any point
- Confirm happy to record interview for research purposes only
- Confirm critical incident record
- Explain two parts to interview
- Are you ready to start?

Narrative timeline of development of part-time working arrangement:

- Tell me about your job.
- When did you first start thinking about a transition to PT?
- I'd like you to draw a timeline from the moment you started first considered a transition to part-time, and explain to me how your working arrangement has developed since then, highlighting the main changes. Draw and describe the key events / transitions – and describe what was going on in between. Events might be work (change of job, change of hours, change in the way you work, manage or arrange your work) or personal (birth of child, start of study, change in health etc).
- Probe to investigate:
 - How is each event connected to the next?

- What motivated each event?
- What did each event mean to you? How did you make sense of it?
- What were your thoughts about part-time working at each point? Who did you talk to and what did they say?
- Now I'd like you to extend that timeline into the future, to show what your working arrangement will look like
- Probe as above

Discussion of critical incident record

- Tell me about one of the situations or events at work from your critical incident record, when your part-time working arrangement became significant or meaningful for you.
- Probe as in questions in critical incident record
- Did any of the other incidents bring different insights? If so, what were they?

Ending:

- Is there anything else you would like to add?
- Thanks
- Explain follow-up discussion group after data analysis.

Appendix C Research participants

C.1 InfoCo UK participants

	Arrangement	How long PT	Job title	Reason
Alan	4 days, not Thurs	1 yr at InfoCo; 4 yrs in previous job	IT engineer / project manager	Formerly own business; illness; children (at primary school); wife's career
Elinor	5 days, 2 from home, 6 hours a day	5 yrs	Tax manager	Health
Eric	4 days, not Wed	3 years	IT engineer / project manager & mentor	Setting up own business; illness; wife's career; children (at primary school)
Florence	Term time; paid 4 days/week	2 yrs in this job; 9 years in total	Business development manager	Children (at primary school)
Keith	80%: 'typically don't work Fridays'	6 months	Internal consultant	Health, life stage, turned 50, eldercare
Natasha	60% Jobshare Wed-Fri	5 years in this job; 12 yrs in previous organization	Operations manager (customer-facing IT support)	Children (at secondary school)
Patricia	3 days Mon-Wed + eves = 70%	2.5 years	Marketing manager	Children (pre school age)
Patsy	4 days Mon-Thurs	6 years	Inclusion & diversity project manager	InfoCo couldn't afford her FT; job change; voluntary work
Susannah	60% Jobshare Mon-Wed	5 years in current job; previously JS 12 yrs	Operations manager (customer-facing IT support)	Children (at secondary school)

Wanda	4 days, Mon-Thurs	2 years	Technical strategy director	Child (at primary school)
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C.2 InfoCo Netherlands participants

	Arrangement	How long PT	Job title	Reason
Anneke	4 days, Mon-Thurs	5 years incl PT parental leave	Marketing manager	Children (pre school age)
Catrien	4 days, not Wednesdays (parental leave)	7 years, various PT & 1yr FT	Sales account manager	Child (primary school age)
Clara	4 days, Mon-Thurs	9 years, various PT	Operations manager Europe (customer-facing IT support)	2 children (primary and pre school ages)
Jeroen	Full-time, but has gone from 50+ to 40 hours	'Short' FT for one year	Customer services project manager	Children (pre school age); to support wife's career
Nienke	80%: five short days	4.5 years	Tax lawyer	Children (primary school age); health/stress
Roos	4 days, Mon-Thurs	15 years, various PT	HR project manager	Personal time: social activities
Tjarko	90%, 4 long days, Mon-Thurs. Part compressed, part PT	2 years	Internal consultant	Health, wife's health, pre-retirement, sailing

Wilma	4 days, not Wednesdays (parental leave)	8 months	Sales account manager	Children (primary and pre school ages)
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C.3 PSF UK participants

	Arrangement	How long PT	Job title	Reason
Adele	4.5 days Tues-Fri (plus half day on Mondays)	4 years, in several orgns; 16mths in this job	Marketing manager	Child (primary school age)
Alistair	80%, Mon-Thurs	7 years	Director, Tax	Health; children (primary school and pre school ages); wife's career
Caitlin	62%; 5 short days	13 years	Executive director, Assurance	Children (primary and secondary school ages)
Carrie	60%, Tues-Thurs	2.5 years	Assistant director, Transaction tax	Didn't need money; stress; social activities; personal time
Cassandra	4 days, Mon-Thurs	10 years	Partner, Tax	Child (secondary school age) & eldercare
Christine	3 days, 18 hours	>10 years	Assistant director, Corporate finance	Children (secondary and primary school ages); some eldercare
Fiona	4 days, Mon-Thurs	18 months	Senior manager, Assurance	Death of close family member; 'get a life'; child (secondary school age)
Naomi	Annualised hours; 3 or 4 days	2 years	Senior Manager, Tax	Child (pre school age)

Phillip	80%, 5 days a week	6 years	Partner, Tax	Pre-retirement (over 55 scheme); more flexibility
Roisin	3 days, Tues-Thurs	2 years in this role; previously for 6 years	Business development director	Children (primary and pre school ages); social activities
Veronica	80%, Tues to Fri	6 months in this job; 12 years PT in total	Senior manager, Tax	Children (primary school ages)

C.4 PSF Netherlands participants

	Arrangement	How long PT	Job title	Reason
Andre	90% Mon-Thurs	3 years (but 'short' FT for 4 previous years)	Senior manager, Tax	Children (primary school and pre school ages); wife's career
Arend	80% Mon-Thurs,	16 years	Senior manager, Tax	Health
Jan	70%; doesn't work Fridays or Mon mornings;	2 years	Senior manager, Assurance	Deaths of 2 close family members; over-55 scheme
Margreeth	80%, doesn't work Fri & Wed afternoons	6 years	Operations manager	Children (primary school age and pre school)
Marloes	80%, not Wednesdays	1 year	Managing consultant, Tax	Health
Melanie	60%, Mon-Wed incl. parental leave	10 years	Senior manager, Assurance / Professional Development	Previous company all moved to 80%; children (primary school and pre school ages)
Paulus	80%, Mon-Thurs	3 years	Director, Assurance	Pre-retirement, over-55 scheme
Simone	60%, 5 days, flexibly	28 years	Senior Manager, Tax	Grown-up kids; works 1 day job elsewhere

Stille	80%, 4 days, not Wed	6 years in total; has only just joined PSF	Project manager, Sustainability	Previous company all moved to 80%; child (primary school age)
Trudy	80%, Mon- Thurs	1 years in this job; 6 years in previous organization	Senior manager, Tax	Children (primary school and pre school age)

Appendix D Final coding structure

CONTEXT NATIONAL

The Netherlands

The UK

CONTEXT ORGANIZATIONAL

InfoCo

Flexible culture

Work-anywhere technology

Global time zones

Focus on wellbeing

Commerically driven company – can't do PT

Compressed week not allowed

Fire-fighting culture

Gender attitudes

Headcount

Managers' attitudes to PT vary

Organizational control: technology; identification with goals and norms

Part-timers invisible

Performance management systems: part-timers don't get hired or promoted; PT jobs not advertised

PSF

Flexible culture

Initiatives to support PT

Flexible hours and location

Commerical imperatives – client service

Compressed week not allowed

Fire-fighting culture

Gender attitudes

Managers' attitudes to PT vary

Part-timers invisible

Performance management & career development systems: part-timers don't get hired or promoted: PT jobs not advertised

Technology – work anywhere

CONTEXT PERSONAL

Non-work roles

Fatherhood

Financial and breadwinning

Motherhood

Personal context – previous PT jobs; PT as long-term process

DISCOURSE 1 NATURE OF MANAGERIAL AND PROFESSIONAL WORK

Some jobs can't be done part-time

(Un)predictability and (lack of) schedule control lead to long hours

Availability expectations; no predictable time off

Customer-facing work

Planning ahead vs crisis or fire drill culture

Team-managing and being available to team & boss during time off

M&A work at PSF

%FTE: 4 days good; 3 days bad

Fast pace makes PT difficult

Autonomy over how and how much work gets done; autonomy paradox

Interdependence

Missing out on info; having to catch up via emails during time off

Responsibility is FT, even if hours are PT

No units of analysis apart from hours; hours and outputs don't match

All jobs can be done part-time

DISCOURSE 2 CATEGORIZING PART-TIME WORK: LIFESTYLE CHOICE OR ORGANIZATIONAL ISSUE?

Part-time NOT an organizational issue; PT as a personal lifestyle choice;

- Career progression as a personal choice

- Designing PT jobs as a personal choice and responsibility

- Working hours as a personal choice

Challenging the discourse of personal choice

DISCOURSE 3 CATEGORIZING PART-TIME WORKERS: STIGMATIZED 'OTHERS' OR THE NEW NORMAL?

Part-timers as 'other'

- Avoiding perception of skiving or poor performance

- Feeling grateful and lucky to be 'accommodated'

- 'Normal' week is strong paradigm; guilt at not being there

- Professional and organizational identity: what it means to be professional

 - Difficult to prioritize non-work during working hours

 - Negative career impact

 - Negative impact on professional identity

 - Positive impact on professional identity

 - Organizational membership

 - Switching off; ability to switch off; switching off is unprofessional

- Protestant work ethic

Part-timers as the 'new normal'

- Four days is new normal; PT is business as usual; don't think about PT much

- Prioritizing non-work during working hours

- Envy of part-timers; pride in being part-time

PROCESS 1 EVALUATION

Depart

Postpone

Doing the identity work

A shock to the system

Finding a suitable manager

Waiting for the right circumstances – legal, organizational

Remain full-time

PROCESS 2 PREPARATION

Gathering best practice information

Building up credit

Constructing a PT professional identity and ‘coming out’ to manager

Resourcing the transition; timing the request for resourcing

PROCESS 3 NEGOTIATION

Negotiation of whether job role is suitable

Negotiation of ‘normal’ schedule of availability

Changing status of Friday; which days and why

Negotiating workload

Keeping 100% responsibility (or >60/80%)

Negotiating career plans

PROCESS 4 ADAPTATION

Post-negotiation restriction on type of work

‘Coming out’ to colleagues and clients

Hiding PT status

Invisibility as a part-timer is good at InfoCo

Managing PT status

Broadcasting PT status – pioneer or role model

Continuing adaptation

Adapting workload / scope of responsibility

Individual techniques

- Wastage

- Being more efficient to achieve FTE outputs

- Being more efficient to compensate for fixed-volume activities

- Cutting out socializing, networking, development activities

Team techniques

- Delegating to team

- Delegating to peers

Adapting availability: maximizing predictable and uninterrupted time off

Individual techniques

- Rigid boundaries – Resisting interruptions

- Flexible boundaries – Accepting interruptions; fair trade and two-way flex

- Planning ahead to maximize predictability

Team techniques

- Clarifying expectations of availability

- Enrolling others in maintaining schedule

- Emergency procedures for contact

- Organizing cover

Identity work and adapting career plans

- Giving up on career

- Not giving up on career

Appendix E Process of emergence and development of PTWA for each participant

E.1 InfoCo UK

	EVALUATION Postpone Depart Remain	PREPARATION Credit Resourcing	NEGOTIATION Job suitability and career implications	NEGOTIATION workload and availability	ADAPTATION Techniques for managing workload	ADAPTATION Techniques for managing availability
Alan	Hired into this job as part-timer	CREDIT: specialist skills; manager struggling to recruit RESOURCING:	SUITABLE? Not discussed CAREER: Not discussed	WORKLOAD: Not discussed (replaced FT predecessor) AVAILABILITY: Agreed Thursday as day off	INDIVIDUAL: TEAM:	INDIVIDUAL: TEAM: clarifies expectations with team; work is slow-paced so no problem with delaying others
Elinor	FT to PT in same job Health – no other options considered	CREDIT: Most experienced team member; they wanted her back after absence RESOURCING:	SUITABLE? Part- restricted to process improvement project with longer deadlines, more plannable CAREER: Not discussed	WORKLOAD: Agreed upfront as 80% of contracted (not typical) hours AVAILABILITY: Agreed upfront to accommodate pattern of breaks needed for health reasons	INDIVIDUAL: planning; cuts out networking & development TEAM: negotiating deadlines, pushing back	INDIVIDUAL: works every day so delays not a problem; plans work to avoid crises and interruptions during time off TEAM:

Eric	'Acquired' into this job as part-timer (having POSTPONED for previous 6 years in other organizations which didn't allow PT)	CREDIT: RESOURCING:	SUITABLE? Switched to more suitable mentoring work on going PT CAREER:	WORKLOAD: reduced because not much work in team; PT job tailored to suit AVAILABILITY: agreed Wednesday as day off	INDIVIDUAL: TEAM: n/a because little work in team	INDIVIDUAL: controls his own time; resists interruptions; strong boundaries TEAM:
Florence	FT to PT In same job. Post maternity leave ALMOST DEPARTED	CREDIT: High performance in the job RESOURCING: Prepared to be available when needed during time off	SUITABLE? Trial to convince reluctant boss CAREER: Not discussed, but she is now returning to FT to restart promotion	WORKLOAD: Not discussed; assumed she would continue to deliver 'the job' AVAILABILITY: Agreed to cover all days, so manager doesn't know which days she works	INDIVIDUAL: cuts out networking & development TEAM: n/a because she hides PT status	INDIVIDUAL: n/a because she behaves as FT; plans work to TEAM: n/a because she hides PT status
Keith	FT to PT in same job. Was ready to DEPART if he didn't get PT	CREDIT: knew manager well; had track record RESOURCING: Prepared to be available when needed during time off; timed request with end of project	SUITABLE? Trial to convince reluctant boss CAREER: Manager said there would be career penalty; not interested in climbing hierarchy	WORKLOAD: No change; assumed he would continue to deliver 'the job' AVAILABILITY: Agreed 'typically not working Fridays' but to be available when needed	INDIVIDUAL: n/a – same workload TEAM:	INDIVIDUAL: manages projects to maximize predictability TEAM:

Natasha	Job share Recruited into FT job with job share partner	CREDIT: Presented as '2 brains for 1 job'	SUITABLE? Job share provides more cover for 168 hour/ week operation	WORKLOAD: shares FT job with partner AVAILABILITY: Covers whole week with job share partner	Workload shared with job share partner; cuts out networking & development	Cover organized with job share partner; also emergency contact protocols with team for evenings & weekends
Patricia	Partly same job / partly tailored job created after part removal from unsuitable job. Was ready to DEPART if didn't get PT	CREDIT: Track record in team; good performer who had replaced poor performer RESOURCING: Timed request to match annual budget	SUITABLE? Can plan ahead CAREER: Expected career plateau	WORKLOAD: New resources taken on to enable her to work PT; job tailored to suit AVAILABILITY: Agreed to work Mon-Wed	INDIVIDUAL: Negotiated extra half day's pay to cover evening work; cuts out networking & development TEAM:	INDIVIDUAL: nature of work is plannable; resists interruptions unless emergency TEAM: customer relationships are shared
Patsy	Hired into this job as part-timer	CREDIT: Internal reputation, specialist expertise, long service RESOURCING: New job so no gap existed	SUITABLE? n/a as job created to suit PT CAREER: Not discussed; climbing hierarchy not expected or wanted	WORKLOAD: New job created to suit AVAILABILITY: Agreed Mon-Thurs (Friday is quiet day)	INDIVIDUAL: TEAM: Delegates upwards to boss	INDIVIDUAL: Resists interruptions TEAM: Sets expectations of availability
Sus-annah	Job share. Recruited into FT job with job share partner	CREDIT: Presented as '2 brains for 1 job'; appointed to 'tick a diversity box'?	SUITABLE? Job share provides more cover for 168 hour/ week operation	WORKLOAD: shares FT job with partner AVAILABILITY: Covers whole week with job share partner	Workload shared with job share partner; cuts out networking & development	Cover organized with job share partner; also emergency contact protocols with team for evenings & weekends

Wanda	Hired into job PT (POSTPONED PT after maternity leave in previous job because of manager and career impact; ALMOST DEPARTED in previous job because of PT perceptions)	CREDIT: Internal reputation RESOURCING: n/a as she took on the 'job role'	SUITABLE? Not discussed CAREER: Discussed desire to continue to climb hierarchy with Diversity Director; InfoCo norm is that PT = plateau; but line manager more sympathetic & development plan in place.	WORKLOAD: Not discussed: broad managerial objectives can't be divided up; replaced FT predecessor, so continued to deliver 'the job'. AVAILABILITY: Told manager how she would organize cover, contact etc	INDIVIDUAL: TEAM: Is planning to formally delegate parts of job now she's 6 months into it; has 'trained' her boss.	INDIVIDUAL: Resists interruptions; plans ahead TEAM: Clarifies expectations of availability
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E.2 InfoCo Netherlands participants

	EVALUATION Postpone Depart Remain	PREPARATION Credit Resourcing	NEGOTIATION Job suitability and career implications	NEGOTIATION workload and availability	ADAPTATION Techniques for managing workload	ADAPTATION Techniques for managing availability
Anneke	FT to PT in same job. POSTPONED PT: worked FT after maternity leave until moved to Netherlands; then PT parental leave; then PT	CREDIT? Long service; proved it could work during parental leave RESOURCING: Has the experience & skills to deliver FTE	SUITABLE? Not client-facing – she is the customer CAREER: Not discussed; expects career pause	WORKLOAD: Not discussed; delivers the same as before AVAILABILITY: Agreed Mon-Thurs because 'Fridays are different'	INDIVIDUAL: Reads emails in own time to catch up TEAM: None	INDIVIDUAL: has learnt to set stricter boundaries; 'send me a text if urgent'; Fridays are different; 'compensates' by working evenings TEAM: sets availability expectations

Catrien	FT to PT in same job. POSTPONED PT: worked FT until legal entitlement after 1 year at InfoCo	CREDIT? Best performer in sales team; parental leave = legal right RESOURCING: Has skills to deliver FTE outputs	SUITABLE? Works independently; measurable targets; CAREER:	WORKLOAD: Not discussed; delivers the same as before AVAILABILITY: Wed is team's 'work from home' day, so best day to not work	INDIVIDUAL: TEAM: Avoids any impact on team	INDIVIDUAL: Out of office says not available; but checks hourly on day off TEAM: Avoids any impact on team
Clara	Hired into this job as part-timer	CREDIT: she had internal reputation; actively built relationship with hiring manager; RESOURCING:	SUITABLE? Not discussed, despite being unpredictable escalations CAREER: Manager said hard to progress as part-timer	WORKLOAD: Not discussed; replaced FT predecessor, so 'job role' needs to be delivered. AVAILABILITY: Mon-Thurs because Friday is commonly day off	INDIVIDUAL: Manages annual objectives to suit TEAM: Negotiates projects with colleagues continually; has 'trained' her boss	INDIVIDUAL: As manager, she controls diary; plans activities to suit her timetable & avoid interruptions TEAM: Communicates clear boundaries; arranges cover with good team & good processes
Jeroen	REMAINED FT: because of culture, manager, policy, he is FT but works only contracted hours	CREDIT: n/a – no change to contract RESOURCING: Still FT	SUITABLE? Gave up manager role, so easier to manage the hours CAREER: Expects career pause	WORKLOAD: n/a because he's still FT	INDIVIDUAL: cuts out networking and development TEAM: n/a – no change to contract	INDIVIDUAL: n/a – still works 5 days TEAM: n/a – still works 5 days

Nienke	Partly same job / partly tailored job created after part removal from unsuitable job. Health crisis – no other options considered	CREDIT: RESOURCING:	SUITABLE? Restricted to non-managerial work; moved to internal process-improvement project CAREER: Not discussed	WORKLOAD: Designed to suit reduced job. AVAILABILITY: Agreed pattern of time off on different days	INDIVIDUAL: TEAM:	INDIVIDUAL: has learnt to resist interruptions and plan work TEAM:
Roos	Hired into this job as part-timer (from temp job). ALMOST DEPARTED: had to wait for acquisition which allowed different employment terms	CREDIT: Departure of many colleagues meant she had unique expertise in team RESOURCING:	SUITABLE? Yes - independent, plannable project work CAREER: Not discussed; not interested in career progress	WORKLOAD: Tailored to suit AVAILABILITY: Mon-Thurs; Friday is 'normal' day to take off	INDIVIDUAL: reads emails in own time to catch up TEAM:	INDIVIDUAL: plans ahead to avoid interruptions TEAM: Sets clear boundaries
Tjarko	Hired into this job as part-timer after removal from unsuitable job. POSTPONED PT for 30 years in InfoCo & previous organizations, because of culture, career, unsupportive managers	CREDIT: Long service RESOURCING:	SUITABLE? Restricted to non-managerial work – now doing slower project work, no escalations; can control timetable CAREER: Not discussed; not interested in career progress	WORKLOAD: Goals slightly tailored to suit; but hes' doing 90% so not very different. AVAILABILITY: agreed Friday off	INDIVIDUAL: cuts out developmental activities. TEAM:	INDIVIDUAL: checks emails Friday morning, as compromise with manager. TEAM: clarified expectations with team by 'being a bit stubborn' at first.

Wilma	<p>FT to PT in same job.</p> <p>Post maternity leave – no other options considered.</p>	<p>CREDIT: legal right to parental leave</p> <p>RESOURCING:</p>	<p>SUITABLE? Sales job very hard to do PT; team targets not adjusted, so PT = burden on others – but work is independent from colleagues</p> <p>CAREER: Not discussed</p>	<p>WORKLOAD: Not Discussed. Assumed she would continue to deliver 'the job'.</p> <p>AVAILABILITY: Agreed which day off; assumed she would cover it herself</p>	<p>INDIVIDUAL: works independently; avoids impact on others by delivering FTE</p> <p>TEAM:</p>	<p>INDIVIDUAL: works independently; no impact on others</p> <p>TEAM: colleagues don't cover</p>
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E.3 PSF UK participants

	EVALUATION Postpone Depart Remain	PREPARATION Credit Resourcing	NEGOTIATION Job suitability and career implications	NEGOTIATION workload and availability	ADAPTATION Techniques for managing workload	ADAPTATION Techniques for managing availability
Alistair	<p>FT to PT in same job (having POSTPONED for 5 years in previous jobs / organizations)</p>	<p>CREDIT:</p> <p>RESOURCING: He planned to delegate, and coached team members accordingly; timed request to match end of project</p>	<p>SUITABLE? Trial first, but as director, he was expected to organize it himself</p> <p>CAREER: Not discussed; assumed to have negative impact; but already a director</p>	<p>WORKLOAD: initial workload serendipitously low; has crept up.</p> <p>AVAILABILITY: Agreed Mon-Thurs, but always takes calls during time off</p>	<p>INDIVIDUAL: cuts out networking & development</p> <p>TEAM: Delegates to subordinates to create development opportunities; delegates sideways/ negotiates workload with peers</p>	<p>INDIVIDUAL: plans ahead to avoid interruptions</p> <p>TEAM: enrolls team in scheduling; emergency contact protocols</p>

Adele	Hired into this job as part-timer	<p>CREDIT: Recommended; built relationship in advance</p> <p>RESOURCING: Assumed she would take on 'job role'</p>	<p>SUITABLE? Not discussed</p> <p>CAREER: Not discussed – not a big issue for her</p>	<p>WORKLOAD: Not discussed; assumed she would deliver same as predecessor.</p> <p>AVAILABILITY: Agreed Tues-Thurs</p>	<p>INDIVIDUAL: cuts out networking & development</p> <p>TEAM: Built junior resources over time; but can't share some decisions</p>	<p>INDIVIDUAL:</p> <p>TEAM:</p>
Caitlin	Hired (promoted) into this job as part-timer	<p>CREDIT: Track record</p> <p>RESOURCING: Assumed she would take on 'job role'</p>	<p>SUITABLE? Had to make case for how she could be signatory and part-timer</p> <p>CAREER: Not discussed; she accepted career penalty</p>	<p>WORKLOAD: Not discussed – delivers same as FT peers.</p> <p>AVAILABILITY: Agreed 5 short days per week, but is available later when needed; accepts interruptions</p>	<p>INDIVIDUAL: cuts out networking & development; compensates for fixed-volume</p> <p>TEAM: Delegates to team; responsibilities unchanged</p>	<p>INDIVIDUAL: plans diary</p> <p>TEAM: Very flexible and accessible to team; shares pattern of availability each week;</p>
Carrie	FT to PT in same job. POSTPONED because of nature of work, career impact. ALMOST DEPARTED because of nature of work	<p>CREDIT: Very strong performer; track record; recent transition – PSF supportive</p> <p>RESOURCING: Accepted need for constant availability because of 'nature' of work</p>	<p>SUITABLE? Highly unsuitable M&A; manager suggested she try it out as experiment</p> <p>CAREER: Accepted career penalty; doesn't want to progress up hierarchy</p>	<p>WORKLOAD: Reduced number of projects.</p> <p>AVAILABILITY: Agreed Tues-Thurs, but with smartphone always on in case of emergency</p>	<p>INDIVIDUAL: Active wastage; self-discipline about what she takes on</p> <p>TEAM:</p>	<p>INDIVIDUAL: Plans ahead to avoid working on days off</p> <p>TEAM: Organizes teaming on projects so she works with more experienced juniors who can cover; shares role on some big projects; emergency protocols during time off</p>

Cassandra	FT to PT in same job. POSTPONED after maternity leave because of culture & lack of role models; ALMOST DEPARTED because of caring crisis – no other options considered	CREDIT: already a partner RESOURCING: Assumed interruptions and same workload	SUITABLE? Not discussed – she's a partner. Trial, but never reviewed CAREER: n/a for partner	WORKLOAD: Not discussed; she 'couldn't risk' losing business AVAILABILITY: Agreed Mon-Thurs; but accepted need for interruptions	INDIVIDUAL: Compensates for fixed-volume meetings TEAM:	INDIVIDUAL: Plans ahead to avoid working on Fridays TEAM: Enrols team in managing scheduling to avoid interruptions; negotiates and works closely with team to plan
Christine	Hired into this job as part-timer (new job created after removal from unsuitable job)	CREDIT: A talent PSF wanted to keep, so job created RESOURCING: New job created and tailored to her needs	SUITABLE? Moved into technical, back-office job after failing to do PT in M&A CAREER: Accepted there is career penalty for PT	WORKLOAD: Tailored to newly created job. AVAILABILITY: Job designed with slower, more predictable & more independent work	INDIVIDUAL: cuts out networking and development TEAM: n/a – works independently	INDIVIDUAL: TEAM: Enrols team in scheduling; some emergency protocols but expects calls on days off

Fiona	FT to PT in same job. POSTPONED PT after maternity leave because of career/professional status POSTPONED again after husband's death, to work out identity issues	CREDIT: Personal circumstances; recent transition – PSF supportive RESOURCING: No preparation	SUITABLE? Not discussed CAREER: Accepted career penalty of PT	WORKLOAD: No change in workload – nobody to hand work to. AVAILABILITY: Agreed Mon-Thurs	INDIVIDUAL: Active wastage after a year of FTE workload; compensates for fixed-volume; cuts out networking and development TEAM: sometimes team resourcing allows an 80% workload, sometimes not	INDIVIDUAL: Resists interruption; plans ahead to avoid crises during time off TEAM: Clear communication of availability to clients and colleagues
Naomi	FT to PT in same job. Post maternity leave	CREDIT: Recent transition; PSF supportive; RESOURCING: Planned to delegate to assistant	SUITABLE? Trial to build manager's confidence CAREER: Discussed career ambitions at negotiation and every appraisal; still wanted promotion, but after plateau	WORKLOAD: pro-rated targets; some clients delegated to assistant. AVAILABILITY: Agreed annualized hours pattern; very flexible	INDIVIDUAL: cuts out networking and development; controls her own workload as senior manager in tax; compensates for fixed-volume TEAM: shares and negotiates work with her team; shares with peers in national team; has 'trained' her boss	INDIVIDUAL: Has learnt to resist interruptions; plans ahead TEAM: Emergency contact protocols during time off; clarifies availability for colleagues & clients

Phillip	FT to PT in same job. 'Over 55s' scheme	CREDIT: Already a partner RESOURCING: Assumed he would delegate	SUITABLE? No discussion – already a partner; works with lots of different teams, so no expectation of constant availability CAREER: Pre-retirement	WORKLOAD: no change; assumed 'the job' needs to be delivered. AVAILABILITY: no change; works every day; always puts work first; takes time off when he can	INDIVIDUAL: TEAM: Not involved – works with lots of different teams	INDIVIDUAL: Plans ahead TEAM: Not involved at all
Roisin	Hired into this job as part-timer	CREDIT: Unique specialist knowledge; built relationship with hiring manager; recent transition – PSF supportive RESOURCING: Assumed she would have to work on days off	SUITABLE? Yes – coordination of relationship with client, so not fast or unpredictable; chose role as suitable for PT CAREER:	WORKLOAD: Designed the new PT role herself, with appropriate work. AVAILABILITY: Agreed Tues-Thurs	INDIVIDUAL: cuts out networking and development; TEAM: Negotiates workload with boss	INDIVIDUAL: Has learnt to resist interruptions TEAM: Nobody to delegate relationship to
Veronica	Hired (promoted) into this job as part-timer	CREDIT: Very high performer RESOURCING: Expected interruptions as she got promoted into more senior job	SUITABLE? CAREER: Wants to continue to climb hierarchy	WORKLOAD: Joined cadre of peers at senior manager level; she 'chooses' how many projects to take on. AVAILABILITY: Agreed Tues-Fri	INDIVIDUAL: controls her own workload as senior manager in Tax TEAM: Delegates to team	INDIVIDUAL: Plans ahead to avoid working on days off TEAM: Clarifies availability; takes emergency calls from team

E.4 PSF Netherlands participants

	EVALUATION Postpone Depart Remain	PREPARATION Credit Resourcing	NEGOTIATION Job suitability and career implications	NEGOTIATION workload and availability	ADAPTATION Techniques for managing workload	ADAPTATION Techniques for managing availability
Andre	FT to PT (parental leave) in same job. POSTPONED since birth of first child 4 years before	CREDIT: Recent transition – PSF supportive RESOURCING: Timed discussion for annual review	SUITABLE? Not discussed; PT = common in dept CAREER:	WORKLOAD: 90% FTE – no change in workload. AVAILABILITY: Agreed Friday afternoons off	INDIVIDUAL: Controls his own workload as senior manager in Tax TEAM: Delegates more to team	INDIVIDUAL: plans better; but answers emergency calls TEAM: Clarifies expectations of availability
Arend	FT to PT in same job. Health – no other options considered.	CREDIT: RESOURCING: Had been off work for 6 months, so welcome return	SUITABLE? Not discussed; had a 'good' reason; PT = common in dept CAREER: Expected PT to mean career penalty, but not ambitious anyway	WORKLOAD: Not discussed. Delivers same as FT peers. AVAILABILITY: Agreed Mon-Thurs because Friday is 'normal' day off	INDIVIDUAL: 'compensates' for fixed- volume by working more; controls his own workload as senior manager in Tax TEAM: Delegates to colleagues	INDIVIDUAL: Resists interruptions; plans ahead TEAM: Broadcasts availability; arranges cover; most of team work PT
Jan	FT to PT in same job. 'Over 55s' scheme	CREDIT: Long service; 'over-55s' scheme RESOURCING: He planned in advance how to 'lose' 20% of job by delegating to newly promoted manager	SUITABLE? Not discussed; PT = common in dept CAREER: n/a – pre- retirement scheme	WORKLOAD: Told manager how he would reduce workload over time. AVAILABILITY: Agreed Mon afternoon-Thursday	INDIVIDUAL: active wastage in 6 months after transition TEAM: Delegates sideways and to subordinates; refuses work	INDIVIDUAL: plans ahead; resists interruptions TEAM: Broadcasts availability; enrolls team in managing availability; arranges cover

Marloes	<p>FT to PT in same job.</p> <p>Health – no other options considered</p>	<p>CREDIT: Had been off work for 2 years; keen to have her back</p> <p>RESOURCING:</p>	<p>SUITABLE? Discussed, and decided yes; PT = common in dept</p> <p>CAREER: Discussed and agreed there would be career impact</p>	<p>WORKLOAD: Not discussed; team is under-resourced.</p> <p>AVAILABILITY: Agreed Wednesdays off; needed mid-week break for health reasons</p>	<p>INDIVIDUAL: cuts out networking & development</p> <p>TEAM: shares client relationship</p>	<p>INDIVIDUAL: Behaves as FT (checks phone, works on days off); also plans ahead to minimize interruptions</p> <p>TEAM: Delegates to subordinates; shares client relationships</p>
Margreeth	<p>Hired into this job as part-timer (new job created after removal from unsuitable job)</p>	<p>CREDIT: had right to PT parental leave</p> <p>RESOURCING: Job created for her</p>	<p>SUITABLE? M&A profoundly unsuitable and unsympathetic to PT; switched to more suitable process improvement job</p> <p>CAREER: Was told career was at an end on transfer out of M&A to 'suitable' job</p>	<p>WORKLOAD: Tailored to suit newly created job.</p> <p>AVAILABILITY: Agreed Wed & Fri afternoons off to suit childcare</p>	<p>INDIVIDUAL: Cuts out networking & development</p> <p>TEAM: works independently, so n/a</p>	<p>INDIVIDUAL: expects interruptions; doesn't turn off phone</p> <p>TEAM: works independently, so n/a</p>
Melanie	<p>Hired into this job as part-timer; now also on PT parental leave</p>	<p>CREDIT: PT parental leave</p> <p>RESOURCING:</p>	<p>SUITABLE? Recruited as part-timer, but switching to more appropriate prof development work (but would probably have done so anyway)</p> <p>CAREER: Not on partner track</p>	<p>WORKLOAD: Joined cadre of peers at senior manager level; she 'chooses' how many projects to take on.</p> <p>AVAILABILITY: Agreed Mon-Wed</p>	<p>INDIVIDUAL: Compensates for fixed-volume by working extra;</p> <p>TEAM: n/a – works independently</p>	<p>INDIVIDUAL: Covers her own gaps in schedule</p> <p>TEAM: Broadcasts availability; enrolls colleagues in setting boundaries</p>

Paulus	FT to PT in same job 'Over-55s' scheme	CREDIT: 'over-55s' PT scheme RESOURCING: He planned to delegate, and coached team members accordingly	SUITABLE? Not discussed – senior person, expected to organize it himself; also company scheme CAREER: n/a because PT is pre-retirement	WORKLOAD: Not discussed; responsibilities unchanged; workload was up to him. AVAILABILITY: Agreed Mon-Wed; has capable team to cover.	INDIVIDUAL: 'work contracts to fill time available' TEAM: Delegates to senior managers in team; trusts team; job role at his stage of life is to pass on expertise	INDIVIDUAL: Forward planning to avoid 'panic'; resists interruptions TEAM: emergency contact only
Simone	Hired into this job as part-timer	CREDIT: Unique expertise; reputation RESOURCING: Second person recruited at same time to fill resourcing gap	SUITABLE? Not discussed; work is ideal – slow, predictable and independent; had a 'good' reason (relevant research) CAREER: she's not interested in climbing hierarchy	WORKLOAD: Job tailored to her needs; second person recruited to fulfil other needs. AVAILABILITY: Agreed to be flexible over 5 days	INDIVIDUAL: TEAM:	INDIVIDUAL: resists interruptions; plans ahead TEAM:
Stille	Hired into this job as part-timer	'Acquired' when his firm taken over by PSF – already a part-timer	SUITABLE? 'Acquired' when his firm taken over by PSF – already a part-timer; work is advisory, independent CAREER:	WORKLOAD: Agreed at interview; job tailored; dept very well resourced. AVAILABILITY: Agreed Wednesday as day off (to suit school timetable)	INDIVIDUAL: 'compensates' for fixed-volume TEAM:	INDIVIDUAL: TEAM:

Trudy	Hired into this job as part-timer	CREDIT: RESOURCING:	SUITABLE? Agreed 3 days not possible at interview. CAREER: Needs to hit career milestones within certain timeframe	WORKLOAD: Not discussed – assumed she would take on FT predecessor's workload. AVAILABILITY: Agreed Mon-Thurs; Friday is 'normal' day off.	INDIVIDUAL: Cuts out some networking but careful not to cut out development work. TEAM: Negotiates workload with team; shared team goals; delegates to capable subordinates ('as all managers should')	INDIVIDUAL: Proactive project management. TEAM: Enrols others in scheduling to avoid interruptions; shares client relationships with team; arranges cover ('continuous practice') as routine; protocols for emergency contact
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Appendix F Discourses – supporting evidence

F.1 Discourse 1: The ‘nature’ of managerial and professional work

F.1.1 The nature of the work: managerial and professional jobs can’t be done part-time

Hours and outputs don’t match; professional jobs have no time boundaries	
Hours and outputs don’t match	Sometimes they need more of my hours than I have available. [] You can’t always keep everything within your however-many hours a week, and some weeks there’s too much to do. Christine, Assistant director, Corporate finance, PSF UK
Professionals deliver to standards, not hours	I don’t think anybody’s ever said to me, You must do this on Friday, but it’s just implicit in my role, I need to deliver a quality response. Roisin, Business development director, PSF UK
Professionals care about customers, not hours	Obviously things always happen at the weekends. InfoCo know that obviously, and know that if you’re kind and caring and care about your customer and you see something, you’re going to jump in if you have to. They would never say you had to, but you would, you’d do it. [] That’s not just job share or part-timers, everybody does it. Natasha, Project manager, InfoCo UK
Full-timers have no time boundaries at all	Working full time at InfoCo means, of course, not working five days; it means all evenings, it means always. [] There is also a lot of work, so you are never done. You never have the feeling that, OK, now everything is under control. And whatever the fire you put out, there are three more new fires. Nienke, Tax lawyer, InfoCo Netherlands

Unpredictable (client-facing, team-managing) work is unsuitable for part-timers	
Client demands are unpredictable	The feeling is that you need to be available five days a week and if a customer calls then you have to be able to answer the phone. [] So people haven't said that directly to me but I know other people who have gone for part-time and been told certain roles [] don't suit part-time. Florence, Business development manager, InfoCo UK
Client-facing work may be outside normal hours	I suppose it's just the fact that you need to perhaps take a call at seven o'clock in the evening, or at six o'clock in the morning. [] It was just when things needed to be done, I couldn't always do them, and then you've got a conflict. Christine, Assistant director, Corporate finance, PSF UK
Client-facing work is unpredictable	When you're client-facing, the clients call you 24/7 and demand things. [] There's a very funny thing with client services, [] they expect and they want from you all the time. It's just the mentality, [] and that's the nature of the industry and the job. Adele, Marketing manager, PSF UK

Fast-paced work is unsuitable for part-timers	
Pressure to respond quickly, even on days off	I might not respond to something within half an hour because it's my day off or whatever, sometimes I do have a bit of kind of like, Oh! [disappointed]; and then I have to go, Oh come on Roisin, don't be so silly, you don't work on Fridays, you really don't have to respond to this in 30 minutes because people are going to think anything less of you. [] But it is a thought sometimes, yeah. Sometimes you think, That doesn't look great. Roisin, Business development director, PSF UK
Longer deadlines are better suited to PT	It [my new job] is more suited to a part-time person. [] It's a longer-term project, your deadlines, you know what they are in advance and you can work towards them. [] Whereas when you're a Regional Manager things just come in when they come in and you have to deal with the most urgent first and then just keep going, whatever else is there. Elinor, Tax manager, InfoCo UK

Part-timers miss out on information in fast-paced environment	When it's global as well, you go to bed at night and then you wake up and a whole host of things have happened, even just during your normal five day week, so if you're missing two days out of that week on a global account... You know the world could have changed between when you finished on Wednesday to when you start on a Monday. Susannah, Operations manager, InfoCo UK
Reading emails is the only way of keeping up	Anything that I really should know about, if I don't read it on Sunday evening, chances are I don't read it at all. [] I don't really have time to kind of go back in time and then kind of look at those emails. Anneke, Marketing manager, InfoCo Netherlands
No back up for part-timers to get information	Availability is an important factor, right, to be able to attend meetings and calls. There is such a high dependency on availability in this company [] that you miss out on information, and there's no back-up for me to get at that information. Jeroen, Project manager, InfoCo Netherlands
Part-timers deal with same volume of information as full-timers	Because I'm not checking email on a Friday, or answering the phone or picking up voicemails, when I get to a Monday morning my inbox is horrendous. [] If you're on leave for a week there's an understanding, Oh they're on leave for a week, I'll go and ask someone else. [] I find that when I'm off for the day, there's an expectation that that's going to get seen to. Wanda, Technical director, InfoCo UK

Part-timers' interdependence, autonomy and schedule control	
Running projects is ideal for PT; schedule control	What we do is probably the ideal job for flexible working, because we manage expectations to suit our time and availability. So we run programmes or projects, we consult to customers, and we don't charge for it, so whatever they get from us, they're really, really happy for. So if I can't do it because I'm on holiday, or because I'm seeing other customers, or doing other things, we just manage expectations. Keith, Internal consultant, InfoCo UK

PT easier if you have schedule control	Normally, an assistant would actually do the work and I would review it and if it needs amendment it would then go back to the assistant, but it would all come back through me before going out to the client. So I just have to factor all that in and be clear about when I am going to be in the office when agreeing deadlines, really. So I'm quite fortunate in that I do manage my workload myself, so I can do that. Naomi, Senior manager, Tax, PSF UK
Junior staff don't have schedule control	As a senior manager it's easier because only the partner is above me and he is fully aware of what is going on, but if assistants or staff or seniors would go part-time – and they usually then work for many managers, maybe six or seven managers – they all have to realise that it's his day off and they find it a nuisance. So it's also the position that you're at. Jan, Senior manager, Assurance, PSF Netherlands
Independent work gives schedule control	It was really a job from nine 'til five, because in there [in that job] it's not about clients; you don't have to deliver to clients that can ring you anytime, you know, I have got everything on paper. There was a telephone on my desk but it never rang, unless it was wrongly connected. So that you only had contact with your files; it was only written procedure, a very solitary job. There wasn't much dynamics, as it is here. Trudy, Senior manager, Tax, PSF Netherlands
Autonomy to get the job done makes PT easier	It's a fantastic place to work, [] with all its limitations of, that I've shared with you, it is extremely flexible. [] You can manage your workload and your times... As long as you get your job done people will just let you get on with it. A lot of, you know, you're given a lot of responsibility and trust. Susannah, Operations manager, InfoCo UK

F.1.2 Challenging the discourse of the 'nature' of the work

Questioning the fast and unpredictable 'nature' of the work	
'Organizing out' unpredictability	Because I'm very organised it [unpredictability] doesn't happen as much as it seems to happen to other people. Cassandra, Partner, Tax, PSF UK

'Fire drill' mentality not really necessary?	This is all about expectations. What we see sometimes is what management seems to be calling fire drills. I mean, Could you have avoided a fire drill by starting it earlier? Tjarko, Internal consultant, InfoCo Netherlands
Most work is plannable	80% of the job, that is plannable and structural, I try to do my best at that. And that leaves the room to deal with the 20% which is unexpected, but if you don't take care of the norm, you're going to be in trouble, because then you're just going to be overwhelmed. Clara, Operations manager, InfoCo Netherlands

Different working practices are not only possible but desirable: forward planning reduces unpredictability; increasing substitutability enables colleagues to cover	
Substitutability so gaps can be covered by colleagues	I know that on a Monday and Tuesday I don't have to worry about a thing because [my jobshare partner] will have everything in hand. [] I think if I was working part-time I would feel responsible and I would answer the phone. [] I can't tell you the peace of mind it gives me, to know that I haven't got to be anxious worrying what's happening. Maybe it's because I'm a control freak and I can't let go, I don't know. Natasha, Operations manager, InfoCo UK
Substitutability: sharing client relationships	You have, so to speak, the huge clients [] but it was too much work [for a part-timer] because I also had all those other clients. So now we divided it: I do one huge client, but together with another colleague. Marloes, Managing consultant, Tax, PSF Netherlands
Good processes reduce unpredictability	It's the process. I'm very process-oriented, so I really try to make sure that there's no surprises and if something comes in on a Friday what do you do, where do you go? I'm there as the point of last resort, but don't call me in the beginning. Try to get it done and get on with it yourself. Clara, Operations manager, InfoCo Netherlands

Proactive planning makes good client service	I'd say I'm quite proactive on project management anyway, because I think that's important to give the clients the right service. But it's a feature of that, that I can normally propose, well, let's do this on Thursday, or let's do this on Monday. Alistair, Director, Tax, PSF UK
Planning can prevent most interruptions to time off	People say, I can't do that [part-time], and, I can't take a day off. I don't believe that. It's a matter of scheduling, I think. There will always be situations where you say, Shit, this timing is lousy – but those are incidents, right? Don't you feel that, that it's in the planning, all about structure? Roos, HR project manager, InfoCo Netherlands

Emphasizing that full-timers can't do everything immediately either	
Full-timers don't respond instantly	If they send an e-mail, they get an answer the next day or the day after. But that's also with a full time manager; they don't get instant feedback. Nienke, Tax lawyer, InfoCo Netherlands
Other time zones don't respond instantly	And also with the guy in Dubai, [] I think people are kind of used to maybe not working the Friday but him working the Sunday, he is more challenged working full-time, you know with the weekend being different from Europe than I'm actually challenged. Anneke, Marketing manager, InfoCo Netherlands

F.2 Discourse 2: Responsibility for PTWAs – personal or organizational?

F.2.1 Part-time as a personal lifestyle choice; not an organizational responsibility

Part-time as a personal lifestyle choice	
Accept <i>either</i> less money / career <i>or</i> stress of FTE PT	From my experience and from the experience that I hear from friends and colleagues, you're losing out one way or another and that's a choice, I'm not saying that that's a good or a bad thing, it's just a statement of fact that either you're losing out on money and on career possibilities or you're getting more stress. Wilma, Account manager, InfoCo Netherlands

'Choosing' children	I believe if you have children, then make a choice for your children. Otherwise you don't have children, so there was a choice I had to make. [] It's a personal choice that I wanted. But it wasn't fitting with what the company wanted. Margreeth, Operations manager, PSF Netherlands
Choosing to be part of a PT-hostile organization	If I come in at quarter past nine in the morning, I get some comments like, Good afternoon. [] I think it's not fair, but that's life, and you choose to be part of it, eh? Margreeth, Operations manager, PSF Netherlands

Working hours are a personal choice and responsibility (at InfoCo)	
Individual chooses working hours	You're managing yourself. Obviously you've got your customers but apart from that you're free to hang yourself, if you will, you know, as many hours as you're willing to throw at it. Susannah, Operations manager, InfoCo UK
Organizations can't regulate hours; it has to be the individual.	They don't know the concept [of part-time] here, there is a certain expectation on availability, and that does not take into consideration if you work part-time. [] It's a corporate multinational, [] there's always more that you need to do. They cannot say, OK, we're going to put you on four days, these are your responsibilities to fill up those four days. They are unable to regulate what I need to do. Jeroen, Project manager, InfoCo Netherlands
Dutch society expects PT; InfoCo doesn't	Within InfoCo, it's more like, Oh! [surprise] are you working part-time? With friends and family it's the other way around. Wilma, Account manager, InfoCo Netherlands

Designing a part-time job is a personal choice and responsibility: avoiding impact on colleagues and clients (FTE workload and 'two-way flexibility'); compensating for the cost of fixed-volume activities	
Individual has to make it work	One colleague, [] he was an exception, so you can make it [part-time] work yourself, but that's based on an individual agreement, he just worked that out himself. Jeroen, Project manager, InfoCo Netherlands

Individual responsible for 'the job', ie FTE workload	As far as the work is concerned, there is nothing else changed; I have the same target, if not a higher target, my target is not lower, [] so that's why I say it's my own responsibility to make up for that one day. Catrien, Account manager, InfoCo Netherlands
Individual responsible for FTE workload	I don't think any people at work would say that they've noticed a difference in how I've worked. I think you know, people who would have worked with me before the children or now, there wouldn't be any noticeable difference in delivery or what or how I've performed. Florence, Business development manager, InfoCo UK
Unable / unwilling to impact on colleagues by delegating workload	I'd been back [from maternity leave] about a month, when there was a reorg, and I was offered what's now my manager's role. [] It was a role I would have wanted, certainly prior – but I decided not to take it. [] Various people said, Oh, but if you delegated more, you could. [] I don't think it could have been done. So I decided to turn that role down. Patricia, Marketing manager, InfoCo UK
Working during time off, to minimize impact on colleagues	I'm acknowledging that I'm part of a team and with the clients, or with my colleagues. So a lot of our juniors work very hard, so sometimes if it helps, I'll review something on a Friday... [] which probably happens most weeks, but that's the nature of the profession. [] Alistair, Director, Tax, PSF UK
Compensating for fixed-volume by being more efficient	It quite often will come up between myself and other colleagues that work part-time, how sometimes you do have to be a lot more efficient when you're part-time, compared to being full-time, because [] administration or non-client work doesn't pro rata decrease when you're part-time. Naomi, Senior manager, Tax, PSF UK
Compensating for fixed-volume by working extra hours	I have to work more hours to get to the billable hour percentage, otherwise I wouldn't reach the billable hours percentage. Arend, Senior manager, Tax, PSF Netherlands

Career progression is a personal choice and responsibility	
Chargeable hours needed to get promoted	You need to perform to a high standard, so you need to have, you know, worked on enough projects that have made enough money. And you need to have had enough chargeable time, [] for job security, but also to move forward and develop a career. Alistair, Director, Tax, PSF UK
Chargeable hours needed to get promoted	If you don't earn enough money for the organisation your career will not be that long in the organisation. [] If my [billable hours] percentage would really be too low, then my rating would be low, and if you have a low rating that means the end. That's the way it works. [] We need to earn money since otherwise they will turn off the lights. Arend, Senior manager, Tax, PSF Netherlands
Can't refuse assignments if you want to get promoted	The young ones that are still in their career modes and who are kept in suspense for many years whether or not they will become ever a partner or not, they keep on working and they don't say no to any assignment they get on their plate because they think it's bad for their career. Also, part-time work <i>is</i> bad for their career because most of the partners still think that. Jan, Senior manager, Assurance, PSF Netherlands
Getting promoted means taking on more work	What it [part-time] does affect is your promotion prospects, because the standard way to get promoted is, you take on more work, which obviously if you're part-time is not a very good way of doing it. Elinor, Tax manager, InfoCo UK
Need to do the job before you're promoted into it	In recent years it has been quite clear that you need to actually be showing that you're already performing at that level before you can really expect to be promoted. Naomi, Senior manager, Tax, PSF UK
Choosing not to go for promotion	I do have a really good counsellor who, if I really, really wanted to push for a promotion he would help me, but I'm just not sure... I was really quite inspired by the idea last year and now I'm just thinking just do the job that I'm doing and keep doing that well for a little while, while I get [the children] sorted. [] I'm not convinced that it [promotion]'s what I want at the moment. Christine, Assistant director, Corporate finance, PSF UK

Choosing not to take on stretching targets	At the moment I have my annual targets, which every manager has, but to go to the next level I would probably have to be putting some real aspirational targets on that, and I just don't feel that it is the right time for me to be putting that sort of pressure on myself. Realistically, it will be a couple of years down the line before I say, OK, I am ready to try and go for the next level and I will be striving to do this. And to do this within, however long. Naomi, Senior manager, Tax, PSF UK
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F.2.2 Challenging the discourse of personal choice and neutrality of organizational working practices

Organizational responsibility for working hours (at PSF)	
Mature, open, flexible culture	So if I need to leave early for something or work from home for half a day to collect my daughter early from school I can do that and it's not an issue. No one's upset about it or no one bitches about it and then I just work in the evening or work whenever and it's really flexible. [] It is really mature and it's open and quite honest as well. Adele, Marketing manager, PSF UK
Manager sets the tone; protects against negative comments	There was one senior manager who, a male, who I think through ignorance rather than malice would say things that would make me feel a bit embarrassed. [] I'd come in on a Tuesday and say, Anything happen yesterday that I should know about? Well, if you'd bothered to come in on a Monday, you'd know. [] And when the senior manager at the time found out that he was saying it, she took him to one side, You just cannot say those kind of things and I won't tolerate it. [] So that was dealt with. Veronica, Senior manager, Tax, PSF UK
Partners talk about PT	We now have a younger group of partners so they bring a younger view as well. It's also what's now being said by the partners, that it's a possibility to work part-time. [] In our communications, it's all possible. Arend, Senior manager, Tax, PSF Netherlands

F.3 Discourse 3: Categorizing part-timers – stigmatized ‘others’ or the ‘new normal’?

F.3.1 Part-timers as ‘other’ – grateful, lucky, and keen to return the favour

Part-timers as ‘other’: grateful, lucky and keen to return the favour	
Lucky to be accommodated	When I was on maternity leave, a lot of the other mums I met, for example in my antenatal group, they had professional careers, [but] a lot of their employers were not particularly accommodating to them going back part-time, so I felt quite fortunate to be able to have that opportunity. Naomi, Senior manager, Tax, PSF UK
Lucky to have supportive team and manager	It works pretty well most of the time and I think I’m pretty lucky to have made it work and have a team that supports me and a manager that supports kind of being flexible. Elinor, Tax manager, InfoCo UK
Lucky to be allowed to work PT	InfoCo have been brilliant to me [] in letting me do it to be honest with you and the fact that I suppose, well I suppose it’s down to my managers as well. They haven’t really realised I’ve worked part-time but I suppose that’s down to the way I’ve worked, [] they’ve never even noticed it so... So no, I mean, so allowing me to do the flexible work has been superb. Florence, Business development manager, InfoCo UK
Returning the favour by working during time off	You sometimes have to be flexible [with your time], but I think the firm are being supportive to me in offering me the flexibility, so it goes both ways. Alistair, Director, Tax, PSF UK
Returning the favour by working evenings	They’re typically quite accommodating. If it really doesn’t work then I’m also fine with doing calls [to the USA] again after eight. It’s my way to compensate a little bit for them. Anneke, Marketing manager, InfoCo Netherlands

‘Other’ because they don’t always prioritize work over non-work roles	
Non-company activities are less legitimate	You often need to be available and it’s harder to say, Guys I’m not there, for no good reason. [] A good reason would be, you’re meeting a client; [] a not so good reason could be, I’m at home working on my boat, doing the painting. [] The perception is that when you make a non-company choice then that feels less legitimate. [] Work, when you’re offline for company reasons, that sounds very, very acceptable. When you’re offline for, well, your own benefit, that feels less legitimate. Tjarko, Internal consultant, InfoCo Netherlands
Acceptable reasons for prioritizing non-work	You seem to have to have a reason to go part-time. [] I’ve gone part-time and everybody goes, Oh yeah, your health, [] that’s acceptable. Children: acceptable. But just wanting to work part-time because you’d quite like a day off in the week when you know you’re not working doesn’t seem to be an acceptable reason. Elinor, Tax manager, InfoCo UK
Need a worthwhile reason for PT	Now, maybe it’s another step that, so family life is slightly decreasing. My kid is going to school more often and then I am able to focus more on my work and work more – otherwise I would be at home on my own and that wouldn’t feel right, I think. It would feel lazy maybe, being at home. Stille, Sustainability project manager, PSF Netherlands
Motherhood implies a dominant non-work identity	I never ever say, Sorry, I have to leave that meeting at that time because I have to pick the kids up, because again people then start questioning everything you do. Is she actually working or is she just always picking those children up? You do kind of get that, so again my policy is, don’t mention it. Florence, Business development manager, InfoCo UK

‘Other’ because they disregard the commercial imperative to work as much as possible	
Working more is always better than working less	It was really difficult for me to work less, [] when I was recovering from the accident. [] I thought that you only had respect at your working place if you would be there for all day, all night, every day. [] I really had the idea only if you’re working till you fall over then you’re providing a good job. Arend, Senior manager, Tax, PSF Netherlands

Protesting identification with commercial organizational values	It's difficult to manage [part-time] in a world where you're client facing and your client works five days a week. And I am just not somebody... and maybe in my role I could, and just say I do not answer emails on Fridays. Maybe I could say that, but for me, that just doesn't sit with my role. Roisin, Business development director, PSF UK
Differentiating oneself from public sector (non-commercial) values	You don't want to appear to kind of always say, Oh no, I'm not working. Although you're totally entitled to it, you know, I'm not being paid for those hours, it's a business environment, so you don't want to kind of, sound like you're in government [the public sector], like, [laughs] Oh no, I don't do Wednesday afternoons. [] In the public sector it's much more common. InfoCo is [] a business driven organisation. Anneke, Marketing manager, InfoCo Netherlands

'Other' because they don't prioritize money over time	
Preferring time to money	I'd rather have the balance that I've got and have the life that I've got now and be happy with the slightly less money. Fiona, Senior manager, Assurance, PSF UK
Younger people want more free time	I think when I started working you all thought, You have to work as hard as you can and all of your time has to be with PSF. I think now the younger people are more, There's a life next to PSF as well and we have to look at our life balance. So that makes it for them more important to have time outside of PSF as well. Arend, Senior manager, Tax, PSF Netherlands
Relatively well-off even as a part-timer	Well, one of the downsides [of part-time] will be, [] when you work less you earn less. [] But I think I can deal with that because I don't think we are living in poverty here in The Netherlands. But that, of course, is a consequence. Simone, Senior manager, Tax, PSF Netherlands

‘Other’ because they’re not available during ‘normal’ working hours	
PT means you can’t be accused of skiving	When someone would go home early because they’d got in early, it’s like, Three o’clock, what the hell are you playing at, going home? Knowing full well that the reality is that actually they’ve done a full day’s work. Or, Oh, you’re “working from home” [makes inverted commas with fingers] tomorrow, oh right, OK [winks]. [] That’s why I specifically chose to [] get paid 80%, rather than arrange my hours in such a way that I worked a bit extra on every other day and then take a day off [] – for my own sort of nice delineation of my position. Eric, IT project manager, InfoCo UK
PT allows you to delegate to others on days off	I am constantly available and I do think that I’m on call but then I’m not obligated to deal with... if somebody wanted something that was going to take me too long on a Monday or a Friday then I would hand it to somebody else. Christine, Assistant director, Corporate finance, PSF UK

F.3.2 Part-timers as the ‘new normal’

Part-timers as the new normal (in some contexts; if they work four days)	
PT increasing in the UK	Quite a lot of my friends, those that have been with organizations for a period of time, have largely been able to negotiate working four days a week, [] so it seems to be more commonplace than it was 10 years ago. Patsy, Inclusion and diversity project manager, InfoCo UK
PT more common than FT in some work groups	In our group, [] it’s almost strange if you’re working five days. [] Not more than one-third of the people are working full-time. [] I think it’s less than five years ago that it really, really started. Arend, Senior manager, Tax, PSF Netherlands
New normal in the Netherlands	In the Netherlands it’s widely accepted that a job where you work four days a week, that counts as full-time. So that you’re no longer the exception, but you fall in to the regular job types. Clara, Operations manager, InfoCo Netherlands

Normal for women in the Netherlands	In general in the country, it's actually very accepted and almost, well, maybe I should put this differently, it is accepted that <i>women</i> work part-time. In fact it is regarded quite strangely when you work full-time. Wilma, Account manager, InfoCo Netherlands
Normal at PSF	There are a lot of people here that [] work four days a week. I probably felt more different in my role at [previous employer] because whenever I had a meeting with HR they'd always say things like, Well, you're very lucky because no-one at your level has three days a week, so I felt quite on my own from that perspective. Roisin, Business development director, PSF UK

Part-timers' authenticity, perspective and judgement

Being true to yourself	I think it's important not to try and be someone you're not to the clients either. I have a very frank style. [] I think as long as you stay true to the Polonius concept 'to thine own self be true' and all that, then it [part-time] doesn't make a big difference. Carrie, Assistant director, Transaction tax, PSF UK
All managers should work PT	All managers should work part time. I really think so, because you really have more time to put things back in perspective. Nienke, Tax lawyer, InfoCo Netherlands
More of yourself to bring to work	If you have a lot of good things next to your work, have a lot of time off, do something interesting next to your work, I think you're maybe even better at your working place. I think it's almost important that people don't work all of their time they have during the day, have some time to read a book or watch a movie or talk to friends and then they bring their life to work as well and I think they're maybe better people. [] I think that I've accepted other people more, accepted their thoughts and views more. Arend, Senior manager, Tax, PSF Netherlands
Better able to deal with work	So it [part-time] makes me a lot happier, and I enjoy my work much more, and [] you don't get thrown back by anything anymore, it's just that you have more energy to deal with the negative things. Nienke, Tax lawyer, InfoCo Netherlands